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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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PHOTO: X

Musk forms new 'American Party' after leaving DOGE

NEW YORK, 6 JULY

US tech billionaire Elon Musk formed a new political party to give Americans their freedom back, after a dramatic falling out with Donald Trump. He announced his plans on his social media platform X that he had set up the 'America Party' to challenge the two-party system in the country. "Today, the America Party is formed to give you back your freedom," Musk said in a post on X. "When it comes to bankrupting our country with waste & graft, we live in a one-party system, not a democracy," the Tesla and SpaceX CEO added. Musk had first raised the prospect of forming a party during his public feud with Trump. *—PTI*

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CM named to Congress' OBC advisory panel

BENGALURU, 6 JULY

The OBC Department of the Congress has proposed appointing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah as one of the members of its Advisory Council, sparking a debate once again on the CM change in the State. However, Siddaramaiah said he would not head the panel, claiming only taken the responsibility of hosting the council's first meeting scheduled to be held on 15 July at the KPCC office in City. Besides Siddaramaiah, other names proposed for the council include Congress MLC BK Hariprasad, former chief ministers Ashok Gehlot, Bhupesh Baghel and Veerappa Moily. Yet leaders claimed that he would head the panel, as the Opposition claimed that a Chief Minister change was imminent in the State. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: FREEPIK

Dalit youth assaulted, paraded nude in Punjab

LUDHIANA, 6 JULY

A young Dalit man in Seeda village was violently assaulted and paraded half-naked after being accused of aiding his friend's elopement with a woman. In a distressing video that has gone viral, the victim, Harjot Singh, was forcibly shaved, his face blackened, and he was humiliated while relatives of the woman hurled casteist slurs. The incident occurred on Tuesday when Harjot was at a salon. Assailants identified as Gurpreet, Simranjeet, Sandeep, Rajveer, and Ramandeep allegedly filmed the act and shared it online. One suspect, Simranjeet, has been arrested, with police pursuing the others. Authorities have condemned the incident, labelling it a severe violation of human dignity. The victim's family is demanding justice and strict punishment for the perpetrators. An FIR has been lodged under various sections of the law, including the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. *—PTI*

French intel: China spread disinformation on Rafale jets

France says 3 jets were downed in Op Sindoor; only 1 Rafale

PARIS, 6 JULY

China used its embassies to spread doubts about the performance of French-made Rafale jets after the India and Pakistan's clashes in May, French military and intelligence officials said. They implicated Beijing in an effort to hammer the reputation and sales of France's flagship fighter.

Findings from a French intelligence service say defence attaches in China's foreign embassies led a charge to undermine Rafale sales, seeking to persuade countries that have already ordered the French-made fighter — notably Indonesia — not to buy more and to encourage others to choose Chinese-made planes.

Pakistan claimed its Air Force downed five Indian planes during the fighting, including three Rafales. India eventually acknowledged the losses but didn't disclose how many.

French Air Force Chief Gen Jerome Bellanger said that he's seen evidence pointing to just 3 Indian losses — a Rafale, a Russian-made Sukhoi and a Mirage 2000, which is an earlier generation French-made jet. It was the first known combat loss of a Rafale, which was sold to eight countries.

French officials have been battling to protect the plane from reputational damage, pushing back against what they allege was a concerted campaign of Rafale-bashing and disinformation online from Pakistan and China.

However, French military officials say they haven't been able to link the online Rafale-bashing directly to the Chinese government. Yet, intelligence assessment says Chinese officials lobbied potential clients to ditch French planes

"The Rafale was targeted because it represents a strategic French offering," the French Defence Ministry wrote on its website. *—PTI*

The Indian Air Force contingent of six Rafale fighter jets during the full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day Parade 2024 in New Delhi ***PHOTO: ANI***

> **There is an atmosphere of conflict going on across the world amid the war between Israel and Iran as well as Russia and Ukraine. The situation is such that there is possibility of a World War taking place anytime**
>
> —Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister

REUTERS' X ACCOUNT BLOCKED IN INDIA

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

International news agency Reuters' X account has been withheld in India "in response to a legal demand", according to a notice displayed by the social media platform. However, a government spokesperson said no legal requirement was made by authorities to withhold the account, and it is working with X to resolve the issue.

"There is no requirement from the Government of India to withhold Reuters and we are continuously working with X to resolve the problem," the spokesperson said.

Sources said a demand for blocking Reuters' X account alongside several hundreds of other accounts was made during Operation Sindoor in May. While several accounts were blocked from accessing in India, Reuters handle was not. X seems to have now acted on that request and blocked the handle in India. *—PTI*

UNPRECEDENTED DELAY

SC urges Centre to evict Chandrachud from CJI residence

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

- Former CJI DY Chandrachud has been in the residence for nearly eight months after his retirement in November 2024. He cited his family's needs for overstaying

In an unprecedented move, the Supreme Court administration has requested the Indian government to reclaim the official residence of the former chief justice of India (CJI), DY Chandrachud, at Krishna Menon Marg, following his extended stay beyond the permitted timeline.

In a letter dated 1 July to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the court administration called for the return of Bungalow No. 5, designated for the sitting CJI, stating that Justice Chandrachud has remained in the residence for nearly eight months after his retirement in November 2024. The originally approved occupancy period ended on 31 May 2025, with a subsequent six-month extension allowed under the Supreme Court Judges (Amendment) Rules, 2022.

Former CJI Sanjiv Khanna, who succeeded Chandrachud, chose not to move into the official accommodation during his six months tenure.

Justice Chandrachud had requested to stay longer due to ongoing renovations at his alternate residence, Bungalow No. 14 on Tughlak Road. Previous CJIs have received informal extensions post-retirement. However, the current communication to the government is unprecedented, highlighting adherence to timelines and legal provisions.

Sources said that Chandrachud has cited his family's needs—specifically concerning his two daughters with special requirements—as contributing factors to the delay. *—PTI*

MUHARRAM PROCESSION

Shia Muslims take out a procession on Muharram to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad at the Battle of Karbala, on Hosur Road, in Bengaluru on Sunday

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Dalai Lama celebrates 90th birthday in exile

DHARAMSHALA, 6 JULY

Thousands gathered in the main courtyard of Tsuglagkhang, the Dalai Lama temple, Sunday to celebrate the 90th birthday of the 14th Dalai Lama, while greetings poured from across the world for the Tibetan spiritual leader.

Political leaders from India and abroad also shared the stage with the Dalai Lama, throwing their support behind the Buddhist leader, who has been living in exile in India from the 1960s.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended warm wishes to the Dalai Lama, and said he has been an enduring symbol of love, compassion, patience and moral discipline. *—PTI*

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RJD, TMC move SC against voter roll revision

KOLKATA, 6 JULY

TMC MP Mahua Moitra and RJD MP Manoj Jha on Sunday moved the Supreme Court challenging an Election Commission's (ECI) order directing for special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar.

Moitra alleged that the order was intended to deprive the bonafide young electorate from voting in this year's polling, and the panel's next target would be West Bengal.

Moitra alleged that it violated several provisions of the Constitution and the Representation of People (RP) Act, 1950.

TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee already flagged this issue and talked about the EC's "diabolical game plan", she said.

Moitra said the order for the SIR was "aimed at disabling lakhs of bonafide voters who were born between 1 July, 1987 and 2 December, 2004 and help the BJP at the Centre.

In her plea to the apex court, she sought a direction to restrain ECI from issuing similar orders in other states of the country.

Similarly, Jha sought direction to the poll body to hold the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections on the basis of the existing electoral rolls. He sought that the order be quashed for being violative of Articles 14, 21, 325 and 326 of the Constitution.

Several civil society organisations such as PUCL and the Association of Democratic Reforms, and activists like Yogendra Yadav approached the top court against the ECI's direction.

The ECI said the exercise was necessitated by rapid urbanisation, migration and population changes. *—PTI*

TRIAL SCHEME

Indians can now get UAE's Golden Visa without buying property

DUBAI, 6 JULY

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The United Arab Emirates government has started a new type of Golden Visa, which will be based on nomination, allowing Indians to overstep the current practice of investing large amounts in either property or business here.

Until now, one of the ways to get Dubai's Golden Visa from India was to invest in property whose value should be at least AED Two Million (Rs 4.66 crore) or invest a large amount in business in the country.

Under the "new nomination-based visa policy," Indians can now enjoy the UAE's Golden Visa for life by paying a fee of AED 1,00,000 (INR around 23.30 lakh), sources said.

India and Bangladesh have been selected for the first phase of testing this visa, and a consultancy named Rayad Group has been chosen to test the initial form of the nomination-based golden visa in India.

Rayad Kamal Ayub, Managing Director of Rayad Group, said, "Whenever an applicant applies for this Golden Visa, we will first check their background, which will include anti-money laundering and criminal record checks, as well as their social media.

"After this, RayadGroup will send the application to the government, which will make the final decision," he added.

Applicants seeking the UAE Golden Visa under the nomination category may obtain pre-approval from their home country without the need to visit Dubai.

"Applications can be submitted through One VASCO centres in India and Bangladesh, our registered offices, our online portal, or our dedicated call centre," he added.

After getting the Golden Visa, one gets the freedom to bring their family members to Dubai. "You can also keep servants and drivers based on this visa," Kamal said, adding, the property-based Golden Visa ends in case of property sale or division, but the nomination-based visa will remain forever. *—PTI*

India and US set to finalise deal ahead of tariff deadline

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

India and the United States are reportedly on the verge of finalising a mini-trade deal, with a decision anticipated within the next 24 to 48 hours. Sources suggest that negotiations have concluded on a limited-scope agreement, which may facilitate wider trade discussions. The average tariff under this mini-deal is expected to hover around 10 per cent.

Both nations aim to commence talks on a comprehensive Bilateral Trade Agreement after 9 July. However, tensions remain over India's positions on agriculture and dairy sectors, areas where it has set clear red lines. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has indicated that the administration is pushing for several trade agreements before higher tariffs come into force on 1 August. India is pushing for exemption from a recently announced 26 per cent reciprocal tariff on its goods, which is currently suspended until the deadline. Meanwhile, India's Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal emphasised the importance of aligning any trade deal with national interests. *—PTI with agencies*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with world leaders at BRICS Summit, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil ***PHOTO: PTI***

BRICS a force for global good: PM

RIO DE JANEIRO, 6 JULY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the significance of BRICS as a catalyst for economic cooperation and global progress during the summit held in the Brazilian coastal city. Notably absent were Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

BRICS has solidified its standing as a formidable alliance, now representing 11 major emerging economies that collectively account for approximately 49.5 per cent of the global population, about 40% of global GDP, and roughly 26% of international trade. Initially comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, the group expanded in 2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, with Indonesia set to join in 2025.

Modi, currently on the fourth leg of his five-nation tour, expressed gratitude to Brazilian President Lula for hosting the summit and highlighted the agenda focusing on the West Asian situation, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and challenges faced by the Global South.

The Brazilian presidency of BRICS focuses on "Strengthening Global South Cooperation for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance." The summit is expected to conclude with key declarations on climate finance and artificial intelligence governance, along with discussions on leveraging national currencies for intra-BRICS trade. India will assume the BRICS presidency next year. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: PTI

Action will be taken against Santosh: HM

BELAGAVI, 6 JULY

State Home Minister G Parameshwara stated that legal action will be taken against Santosh Jarkiholi, son of BJP MLA and former minister Ramesh Jarkiholi, following his alleged firearm discharge during a temple festival in Gokak. The incident occurred on Saturday during the Lakshmi Devi temple fair in Gokak, where a viral video showed Santosh reportedly firing a gun into the air while celebrating amidst a crowd. In light of this, the Gokak Town Police have filed a First Information Report (FIR) against him for the illegal use of a firearm in a public setting. Parameshwara assured the media that the police would conduct a thorough investigation without yielding to pressure. "No one is above the law," he emphasised. *—PTI*

Man falls into fire during Muharram festivities, critical

RAICHUR, 6 JULY

A youth sustained serious burn injuries after accidentally falling into a fire pit (the traditional Alayi Kuni ritual) during Muharram celebrations in Yeragunti village of Lingasugur taluk, Raichur district on Saturday night. While attempting to cross over the fire pit, Hanumanth Patil's, 33, foot got caught in a wooden log, causing him to fall into the flames. He was immediately rushed to the government hospital in Lingasugur for initial treatment. Due to the severity of the burn injuries, he was then shifted to the Raichur RIMS Hospital for advanced medical care. Dr. Surendra Babu, District Health and Family Welfare Officer (DHO) told SALAR NEWS, "Hanumanth has sustained 90 per cent burns and is currently undergoing treatment at RIMS hospital in Raichur". *—Salar News*

DC orders inquiry against Hunsur BEO

MYSURU, 6 JULY

Deputy Commissioner G Lakshmikanth Reddy has asked the deputy director of public instruction (DDPI) to investigate allegations that the Hunsur block education officer (BEO) took bribe from guest teacher aspirants for their appointment. The DC ordered this investigation after a complaint by Hunsur MLA GD Harishgowda at the district development coordination meeting held at the Zilla Parishad on Saturday. The DC has asked the DDPI to submit a report within a week. The Hunsur BEO is accused of taking Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000 bribe from each guest teacher for their renewal and appointment. *—Salar News*

Mysuru admin forms 19 panels for Dasara

MYSURU, 6 JULY

Eight weeks ahead of Mysuru Dasara celebrations, which is scheduled to be held between 22 September and 2 October, Mysuru Deputy Commissioner Lakshmikanta Reddy has formed 19 Dasara subcommittees to organise the Dasara 2025 in a grand way. With Chief Minister Siddaramaiah directing the authorities concerned and his cabinet colleagues to organise the festival on a grand scale, the authorities nominated official members to the subcommittees. This follows a meeting by district in-charge minister HC Mahadevappa. Additional deputy commissioner Shivaraj P is Dasara deputy special officer (DDSO) to the welcoming, invitation and reception subcommittee, and commissioner of police Seema Latkar is DDSO to the procession and torch-light parade subcommittees, while Malathi Priya is the DDSO to Gajapayana. *—Salar News*

Tension grips Shivamogga over 'desecration' of idols

Cops are hunting for those who spread baseless rumours

SHIVAMOGGA, 6 JULY

Tension prevailed in Shivamogga town on Sunday morning after rumours of someone throwing idols of Lord Ganesha and Nagadevate into a drain in Shanti Nagar near Ragigudda in Shivamogga taluk on Saturday night.

According to the sources, the incident occurred in the Shantinagar ward of the district headquarters town of Shivamogga, where the idols had recently been installed on the main road of the Bangarappa Layout.

Residents of the area strongly condemned the act of vandalism and expressed anger over the alleged insult to the deities.

Senior police officers, including Shivamogga Superintendent of Police Mithun Kumar, visited the site and confirmed that the rumour was baseless. They appealed to the people to not react to such rumours.

SP Mithun Kumar said spreading such rumours were intended to create communal disturbance in the society and assured that the perpetrators of the anti-social act will be brought to book.

The cybercrime investigation sleuths of the police are monitoring social media posts to zero in on people who either circulated or responded to the post, the SP said.

Additional police forces have been deployed in the area, and tight security arrangements are in place to prevent any further disturbance. The situation is currently under control, and police are continuing their investigation.

BJP State President Vijayendra posted on X, "The @INCKarnataka government, which looks at Hindu organisations with a jaundiced eye, has always stood as a backbone to anti-Hindu forces. Especially in Shivamogga district, the excesses of miscreants have reached extreme levels," he alleged. "If the government does not immediately take strict action against these evil elements, it will have to bear responsibility for the consequences that follow," the BJP leader warned.

—Salar News with Agencies

Local residents expressed anger over alleged insult to the deities, as forces have been deployed to prevent any further disturbance **PHOTO: X**

BJP seeks CM's apology for Covid-19 vaccines claim

BENGALURU, 6 JULY

BJP on Sunday demanded an apology from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for attributing a spate of cardiac arrests in Karnataka to COVID-19 vaccination, after an expert panel found no evidence to support the claim.

A panel constituted by the government concluded that there is no single cause behind the observed increase in sudden cardiac deaths. Rather, it described the phenomenon as multifactorial, with behavioural, genetic and environmental risk factors contributing.

The BJP said Siddaramaiah must issue an unconditional apology for making what it called a "baseless allegation".

PHOTO: PTI

Calling Siddaramaiah's remarks "irresponsible," Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said premier national institutions, including the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and AIIMS-Delhi, have clarified that there is no scientific evidence linking Covid-19 vaccines to the recent heart attacks.

"Siddaramaiah is deliberately making such statements because the vaccine was developed during Prime Minister Modi's tenure," Joshi said in Hubballi.

"They assumed the pandemic would politically damage the Prime Minister—people would suffer and turn against him. But PM Modi handled Covid with sensitivity and care."

Joshi said that because Prime Minister Narendra Modi was widely credited with managing the pandemic effectively, the opposition was resorting to unfounded claims.

—PTI

TWO DIE IN DRAG RACING ACCIDENT IN MYSURU

MYSURU, 6 JULY

Two persons including a food delivery boy died after a high-end speeding bike hit them around 2am on Sunday near Banni Mantap. The bike caught fire due to the impact of the collision.

Police said the deceased, Mohammed Shareian alias Shara, 30, resident of KP Mohalla of Chamarajanagar, was riding the bike when a food delivery boy – Karthik MS, 42, came in the way.

Police believe Shara was drag racing at the time when the bike caught fire after it hit a roadside lamp post. The Banni Mantap road, which is a concrete stretch, is often used for drag racing during the wee hours, according to locals. *—Salar News*

AIYAR CALLS FOR LIBERATION FROM MODI'S RULE

MYSURU, 6 JULY

At the Mysuru Literary Festival on Sunday, former Union Minister and senior Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar urged Indians to liberate the nation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rule. Speaking on the second day of the festival, Aiyar expressed concerns that Modi's eleven-year tenure has set dangerous precedents that threaten India's future.

Despite acknowledging Modi's substantial support, Aiyar argued that many voters do not support him based on religious grounds. He commented on the growing dissatisfaction with the BJP government in various states and stressed the need to protect India from what he referred to as "misrule."

Aiyar also reflected on the historical context of political decisions, expressing his disapproval of the 1975 Emergency declared by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, while highlighting the contributions of both Hindu and Muslim leaders in India's history. *—Salar News*

CM honours Jagjivan Ram

BENGALURU, 6 JULY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday paid floral tributes to Babu Jagjivan Ram near the west gate of Vidhana Soudha, as part of a memorial service organised in honour of the late leader's death anniversary.

Siddaramaiah described Jagjivan Ram as a rare and capable leader who made significant contributions during a critical period in India's history. "A rare leader and a good administrator (he was). There was a food shortage in our country. Babu Jagjivan Ram did a good job as a minister. He was an inspiration to all of us, as a leader of Dalits, backward classes and minorities," Siddaramaiah said.

Touching upon internal political developments, Siddaramaiah said he would speak to the high command regarding recent decisions and meetings. "I had said to hold a meeting in Karnataka. I don't know why I was made the chairman. They have announced. If I give you responsibility, will you run away? There is no question of leaving the guarantee scheme. We are allocating some funds for road development to MLAs, including BJP and JDS members," he said. *—ANI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah pays tributes to Babu Jagjivan Ram at Vidhana Soudha on Sunday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Infy warns employees against overworking

BENGALURU, 6 JULY

IT firm Infosys is making headlines once again, this time for sending personalised warning emails to employees exceeding designated working hours, despite founder Narayana Murthy's earlier endorsement of a 70-hour workweek.

The company has introduced an automated system that triggers alerts when employees work more than nine hours and 15 minutes in a single day.

This system is overseen by the HR department, which monitors the working hours of its approximately 323,500 staff members on a monthly basis. Employees who exceed the prescribed working duration receive detailed email notifications outlining their remote working days, total hours worked, and daily averages.

The initiative follows the transition to hybrid working arrangements, with a new mandate requiring employees to be present in the office for at least ten days a month, starting November 2023. The emails issued by the HR department emphasise the importance of balancing work and personal health for overall wellbeing and professional success.

The move is timely, as there are growing concerns about the health of young tech professionals. In light of these concerns, Infosys has also introduced guidelines advocating for regular breaks and encouraging open communication with management on workloads. *—Agencies*

CM's name in Cong OBC panel causes confusion

BENGALURU, 6 JULY

The OBC Department of the Congress proposed appointing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah as one of the members of its Advisory Council, sparking a debate once again on the CM change in the State.

A letter written by Anil Jaihind, who heads the All India Congress Committee (OBC Dept), proposed the names of 24 people in the panel and sought the approval of AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge.

Besides Siddaramaiah, other names proposed for the council include Congress MLC B K Hariprasad, former chief ministers Ashok Gehlot, Bhupesh Baghel and Veerappa Moily.

Reacting to the development, Siddaramaiah on Sunday said he had no prior information about the move and came to know through media reports.

"I don't know about it. I too read it in the newspapers. You (media) have reported it. I will speak to the high command," the CM told reporters.

Siddaramaiah also mentioned that the Congress OBC President had requested him to host a meeting in Karnataka, which is scheduled for 15 July.

When asked about whether he would accept the responsibility, he said, "Should I run away when the responsibility is given to me? I had not sought this role and had no clue about it. The party high command has announced it. I will speak to them.... I have no information. What is the post, first of all? Different newspapers have used different designations," he remarked.

He clarified that he had no intention to shift to national politics.

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters in Mysuru, BJP State President BY Vijayendra said, "Proposing Siddaramaiah for the All India Backward Class Advisory Committee means he has been directed to resign and move to Delhi."

However, Home Minister G Parameshwara dismissed suggestions that Siddaramaiah was moving to national politics.

"Just because Siddaramaiah's name has been proposed for the Backward Classes Advisory Committee doesn't mean he is shifting to national politics," he said. *—PTI*

Vokkaligas, Lingayats are OBCs at national level: DKS

KANAKAPURA, 6 JULY

Stating that Vokkaligas and Lingayats are considered OBCs at the national level, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar today said that the OBC Advisory Council meeting was being held to uplift the backward classes.

Speaking to reporters at Bijjahalli in Kanakapura taluk, he said, "There are many wings in the party for various sections of the society like minorities, SC/ST, etc. Jains and Sikhs are also part of minority wing. The BJP gets restless if it doesn't raise issues like this." He was replying to a question on BJP leaders' criticism that Chief Miniter Siddaramaiah being given the responsibility of OBC Advisory Council was a ploy to send him off to national politics.

"I had suggested that the OBC Advisory Council meeting be held at the KPCC office as the party is in power in the State. Over 40 leaders from across the country are participating in the meeting," he added.

—Salar News

DKS deserves a higher position: Rambapuri seer

KANAKAPURA, 6 JULY

Praising Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar for his efforts to strengthen the party in the State, Rambapuri seer Sri Rajadeshikendra Shivacharya said that he deserved a higher position after the last elections.

Speaking at an event organised to inaugurate the steps at the Siddeshwaraswamy hills in Kanakapura taluk, he said, "He should have got a higher position after the last elections. May he get a higher position in the days to come."

"The people of Karnataka are aware of his hard work in securing a sweeping majority for the party in the State. Political leaders will be respected if they respect the arrangement they had," he said.

Shivacharya said that Congress leaders themselves were unhappy with development in the State.

"Asking Shivakumar to relinquish the KPCC Presidency until he becomes the CM is not a very principled approach by the senior leaders," Shivacharya said.

"It is important that the national leaders clear the air, there is no point of other leaders making statements about it. People must keep their word in politics. We all have seen what happened with the BJP in the past," Shivacharya said.

However, Shivakumar rejected the claims, saying, "Why should I talk about it openly. It is between me and my party. We are all working together in the party." *—Salar News*

FLASH FLOODS FEARED

Yadgir on alert as Narayanpur dam opens gates

YADAGIR, 6 JULY

Residents on the banks of the Krishna river in Yadgir were asked to be on high alert as a heavy sum of 95,000 cusecs of water was released from Narayanpur reservoir on Saturday evening.

The Karnataka Niravari Nigam Niyamita of Vijaypura (Water Corporation Ltd), as per the directions of Vijaypura Deputy Commissioner Bubaalan had released water from the Alamatti reservoir to Narayanpur reservoir to maintain water levels.

The water levels in Krishna river and Alamatti dam were increasing due to heavy rains in south Maharashtra.

Yadagir DC Sushila said water was being released from the Narayanpur reservoir in phases to avoid flash floods. The water level in the dam was 491.43meters with 26.66tmcft storage at 5pm on Saturday.

The water levels in Krishna river and Alamatti dam were increasing due to heavy rains in south Maharashtra **PHOTO: X**

Similarly, water from the Rakkaskop reservoir in Belagavi was being released to Markandeya river, owing to the continuous downpour from about a week. Following the release, the river increased by about a kilometre in width, ruining crops grown in the Belagavi taluk

"Not only vegetables but also maize and commercial crop sugarcane will be spoiled if the rain continues for another 2-3 days," said Karnataka Rajya Raira Sangh and Hasiru Sene Belagavi taluk President Appasaheb Desai.

Belagavi City Corporation Commissioner Shubha B said that the reservoir reached its brims in the first week of July due to the rains in the Maharashtrian Western Ghats and Belagavi.

"There will be no shortage of water to Belagavi till June 2026 if the reservoir fills in the monsoon," Shubha B said.

—Salar News

TN to expand Rs 1,000 aid scheme for women

CHENNAI, 6 JULY

The Tamil Nadu government on Sunday said the Rs 1,000 monthly assistance under Kalaignar's Women's Rights Scheme will be expanded to include more eligible women. Listing out a string of special schemes being implemented by the Special Programme Implementation Department, state government said 63,949 students got employment through job fairs organised under "Naan Mudhalvan" (I am the first) scheme. The skill development and employability facilitation plan is among the flagship initiatives of DMK regime. Under the plan, 29 government engineering colleges have been equipped with skill and employment centres at an estimated cost of Rs 30.17 crore. So far, 41,38,833 students and 1,00,960 lecturers have received training under this scheme. *—PTI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Gujarat AAP MLA held for attempt to murder

RAJPIPLA, 6 JULY

Gujarat AAP MLA Chaitar Vasava was arrested on Saturday night for "attempt to murder" after he allegedly attacked a taluka panchayat functionary at Dediapada in Narmada district, police said on Sunday. The incident took place on Saturday during a meeting organised at regional office under Vasava's constituency Dediapada. During the meeting, Vasava got agitated after raising objection over his nominee not being considered for appointment as a member of the "Aapno Taluko Vibrant Taluko" (ATVT), a local-level coordination committee, said the FIR registered at Dediapada police station. When Dediapda taluka panchayat president Sanjay Vasava, who was part of the meeting, objected, MLA allegedly hurled a mobile phone at him, causing injuries on his head, the FIR said. *—PTI*

Health min visits hospital collapse victim's family

KOTTAYAM, 6 JULY

Kerala Health Minister Veena George on Sunday visited the family of a woman who died after a portion of a building of the Government Medical College Hospital collapsed here three days ago. Bindu, 52, who was accompanying her inpatient daughter, got trapped in the debris after part of a building in the hospital collapsed on Thursday. Veena, along with local CPM leaders, reached the home of the victim on Sunday morning, a day after the state witnessed raging protests seeking her resignation over the tragedy. She interacted with Bindhu's husband, mother and children and assured them of all support from the government. The health minister told reporters later that the tragic death was heartbreaking and utmost painful.*—PTI*

J&K confident of statehood bill in upcoming session

JAMMU, 6 JULY

National Conference provincial president Rattan Lal Gupta on Sunday said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir are confident that the BJP-led government will table a bill for restoration of statehood to the Union Territory in the upcoming parliamentary session. The Monsoon session of Parliament is scheduled to start on 21 July and continue till 12 August. Addressing the day-long party convention here, Gupta said the present dual power structure is not in the interest of the people of the UT and has only created "administrative confusion and chaos." He said the people have confidence that the Modi government will bring the statehood bill for J&K in the upcoming Parliament session.*—PTI*

India, Argentina agree to diversify bilateral trade

Modi arrived in Brazil to attend the 17th BRICS Summit

BUENOS AIRES/RIO DE JANEIRO/NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

India and Argentina on Saturday agreed to diversify two-way trade and ramp up cooperation in defence, critical minerals, pharmaceutical, energy and mining sectors with Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasising on taking the ties between the two natural partners to "greater heights".

Modi held wide-ranging talks with Argentine President Javier Milei, a day after landing at the South American nation in the third leg of his five-nation tour.

Though Modi visited Argentina in 2018 to attend the G20 Summit, it is the first bilateral visit to the country by an Indian prime minister after a gap of 57 years.

In the meeting, the prime minister thanked President Milei for extending strong support to India following the Pahalgam terror attack and appreciated Argentina's solidarity during this difficult period.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Argentine President Javier Milei during his ceremonial welcome at Casa Rosada, in Buenos Aires, Argentina *PHOTO: PTI*

He said that there is immense scope to enhance India-Argentina cooperation in areas like pharmaceuticals and sports as well.

Modi has arrived in Brazil for a four-day visit, during which he will participate in the 17th BRICS Summit and undertake a state visit. This is the fourth leg of his five-nation visit.

This will be the first bilateral visit to the country by an Indian prime minister in nearly six decades.

In a separate but related incident, Congress on Sunday, with Modi in Brazil, recalled the events leading up to the formation of the grouping as also the Summit hosted by India in 2012 during which then PM Manmohan Singh had proposed the establishment of a BRICS Development Bank.

- Modi has arrived in Brazil for a four-day visit, during which he will participate in the 17th BRICS Summit and undertake a state visit. This is the fourth leg of his five-nation visit.

It was in 1998 that the Arabic-speaking, Asia-leaning, Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov floated the idea of a trilateral forum called RIC -- Russia, India and China, he recalled.

This was done to promote multipolarity in global affairs when the US was triumphant, Ramesh said in his post on X. *—PTI*

MARATHI LANGUAGE ROW

'Was Sambhaji Maharaj a fool to learn 16 languages'

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 6 JULY

Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Gaikwad invoked the legacy of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, a renowned polyglot, to criticise Uddhav and Raj Thackeray for their vehement opposition to Hindi and the three-language policy in state schools. During a joint rally, the Thackeray cousins celebrated their success in persuading the Devendra Fadnavis-led government to withdraw resolutions regarding the teaching of Hindi in English and Marathi medium schools from Class 1.

Gaikwad dismissed their stance, questioning, "Was Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj a fool to learn 16 languages? Shouldn't we learn as many languages as possible?" He further suggested that embracing Urdu could aid in combating terrorism, highlighting the need for cooperation across linguistic lines.

The rally seems to have stirred concern among Mahayuti leaders. Sanjay Raut of Sena (UBT) noted that the Thackeray cousins' unity has left Fadnavis and his allies disconcerted, hinting at a potential political alliance between their parties.

Sanjay Gaikwad *PHOTO: PTI*

Meanwhile, Maharashtra minister Ashish Shelar condemned recent attacks on Hindi-speaking individuals by MNS workers, drawing parallels to religiously motivated violence in Pahalgam. He asserted that the BJP stands ready to defend both the pride of Marathi people and the rights of non-Marathi residents, urging an end to language-based hostility. *—PTI*

Support grows for Diljit amid 'Sardaar Ji 3' row

CHANDIGARH, 6 JULY

Amidst rising tensions over Diljit Dosanjh's film 'Sardaar Ji 3' featuring Pakistani actress Hania Aamir, Sikh leaders across various political parties have rallied to support the singer-actor, labelling calls for the revocation of his Indian citizenship as unjust.

Trade unions, such as the All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) and the Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE), have condemned Dosanjh's collaboration with Aamir in the wake of the recent Pahalgam terror attack.

- Trade unions, such as the All Indian Cine Workers Association and the Federation of Western India Cine Employees. have condemned Dosanjh's collaboration with Aamir in the wake of the recent Pahalgam terror attack.

FWICE even requested that his citizenship be revoked. However, prominent political figures, including Congress's Partap Singh Bajwa, BJP's RP Singh, and AAP's Kultar Sandhwan have defended Dosanjh.

Bajwa remarked that Dosanjh, a celebrated artist, has positively represented Indian culture on international platforms and that artistic collaborations should not be politicised. Singh echoed this sentiment, stating that requests to revoke citizenship are irrational, highlighting the hypocrisy of nationalism in today's media landscape.

Dosanjh has defended the film's overseas release, explaining that it was completed long before Pahalgam incident and emphasising necessity of cultural exchange amid escalating tensions. *—PTI*

Bihar voter rolls drive sparks political uproar

PATNA/NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

As Bihar prepares for Assembly elections later this year, two developments — a voter roll revision drive and the murder of a prominent businessman — have ignited a political storm.

The Election Commission (EC) has confirmed that the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is proceeding smoothly in Bihar, based on its 24 June 2025 order. Confusion erupted after an EC advertisement suggested that only a form needed to be filled, prompting accusations from the opposition of a deliberate attempt to disenfranchise Dalits and other marginalised groups.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that the SIR was a BJP-RSS plot to rob eight crore voters of their rights, while RJD's Tejashwi Yadav questioned why the exercise is being conducted only in Bihar. EC rejected these claims, calling them misleading and reaffirmed that its procedures remain unchanged.

Simultaneously, the murder of businessman Gopal Khemka outside his Patna home has fuelled criticism of the state's law and order.

Rahul Gandhi called Bihar the "crime capital of India," and Tejashwi Yadav alleged that over 65,000 murders have taken place under NDA rule. Khemka's son was similarly killed in 2017, with no convictions so far.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has ordered a swift investigation, forming an SIT to probe the killing.

Additionally, Union minister Chirag Paswan on Sunday voiced his support for the introduction of domicile policy in government jobs in the state. *—PTI*

Shah calls for expansion of cooperative move

GANDHINAGAR, 6 JULY

On the occasion of the fourth foundation day of the Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India, a grand Sakhkar Samelan was organized in Anand, known as the Milk Capital of India, in the presence of Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.

Inaugurating various development works of the world-renowned Amul Dairy, Shah called for expanding the cooperative movement nationwide based on the five Ps - People, PACS, Platform, Policy, and Prosperity, said a release from the Gujarat CMO.

The Ministry of Cooperation has been working over the past four years on the foundation of the five Ps - People (service-oriented), PACS (strengthening Primary Agricultural Credit Societies), Platform (digital platform), Policy (new policies), and Prosperity (societal prosperity). Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the scope of cooperative activities has been expanding. *—ANI*

CONG ACCUSES CENTRE OF TWISTING WORLD BANK REPORT

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

Congress MP Jairam Ramesh on Sunday accused the central government of misrepresenting the World Bank's Poverty and Equity Brief for India, stating that poverty and inequality remain "deeply troubling", with 28.1 per cent of Indians living in poverty.

He said government supporters are now trying to twist the data to claim that India is "one of the most equal societies," a claim he called "staggeringly out-of-touch."

Ramesh raised alarms over rising inequality in India, revealing that in 2023-24, top

10 per cent of earners made 13 times more than bottom 10 per cent. He also warned that flaws in government data may be hiding the true extent of poverty and inequality, which could be worse if newer poverty benchmarks were used.

Ramesh stated that poverty and inequality in India remain deeply troubling, with a poverty rate of 28.1 per cent.

It is worth recalling that these changes were many after the Government rejected the previous iteration of the survey after it showed falling consumption in rural areas.

In the letter, he also pointed out that millions of Indians are living just above the international poverty line, and warned that any shock, such as job loss or price rise, could push them back into poverty.

To protect these vulnerable groups, the party demanded stronger support for welfare schemes. *—ANI*

Gadkari warns of 'World War' amidst authoritarianism of superpowers

NAGPUR, 6 JULY

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has expressed concern over the rising atmosphere of conflict on the global stage, attributing it to the authoritarianism displayed by superpowers. Speaking at the launch of the book Beyond Borders, Gadkari highlighted the ongoing wars in Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Iran as a significant threat to international harmony.

The minister praised India as a nation rooted in the teachings of Buddha, advocating for truth, non-violence, and peace as crucial guiding principles for future policy. He warned that the current geopolitical climate could lead to a World War "at any time," stressing the need for a comprehensive review of international developments.

Gadkari noted that nature of warfare is evolving due to advanced technologies, such as missiles and drones, which are increasingly deployed against civilian populations. He remarked that this has made the protection of humanity increasingly challenging. *—PTI*

AGRICULTURAL SECTOR BOOST

Goyal meets Jammu & Kashmir traders

SRINAGAR, 6 JULY

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal met with representatives of the Jammu & Kashmir Fruits and Vegetable Processing and Integrated Cold Chain Association (JKPICCA) in Srinagar on Sunday.

The meeting focused on strategies to sustain industrial development in the cold chain and agro-processing sectors, crucial for strengthening J&K's agricultural economy and boosting exports.

Earlier today, Goyal addressed the FTII: Traders Conclave - 2025 in Srinagar and promised to work for the a reduction in the Goods and Services Tax imposed on handicrafts and handloom products to help promote the sector.

The Union Minister said that Jammu and Kashmir will soon get a Centre of Excellence for Packaging and Design.

Union Minister of Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal met with representatives of the Jammu & Kashmir Fruits and Vegetable Processing and Integrated Cold Chain Association *PHOTO: X/ Piyush Goyal*

Further, the Union Minister said that representatives have discussed setting up a Centre of Excellence (CoE) focused on storage technology, cold chain infrastructure, and encouraging startups and new talent.

Goyal also assured that he will discuss with the NTPC and Solar Energy Corporation to establish a solar lighting or power generation facility in the area to help producers to export their products as a green product to get a greater prices.

He had also held detailed discussions with the MSME Development Forum, Jammu-Kashmir, regarding various suggestions to promote local enterprises. *—ANI*

Goyal to look into Srinagar apple traders' demands

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday assured apple traders in Jammu and Kashmir to look into their demand for greater protection from imports, but emphasised the need to balance the interests of both growers and consumers.

Goyal also said he will take up the suggestion of stakeholders to reduce goods and services tax (GST) on handicrafts. The industry has called for a cut in GST from 12 per cent to 5 per cent.

On Kashmiri apples, he said the industry has requested for more protection on this fruit, which at present attracts a minimum import price (MIP) Rs 50 per Kg and 50 per cent import duty.

After accounting for all charges and costs, including transportation, marketing, branding, and retailing, consumers pay Rs 125-150 per kg, he said, adding that there is also a need to balance the interests of consumers and

PHOTO: ANI

farmers.

At present, India imports 4.5-5 tonnes of apple every year to meet the shortage in the domestic market.

Further, he said India is signing new free trade agreements (FTAs) to provide nearer market access to Indian goods and services.

He added that India will always protect the interest of Indian industry and consumers on these agreements. *—PTI*

Death toll in T'gana explosion rises to 42

HYDERABAD, 6 JULY

The death toll in the Sigachi Industries pharmaceutical plant explosion in Pashamylaram in Sangareddy district, rose to 41 on Sunday, after a critically injured victim died in hospital. Another person was identified through DNA profiling.The blast occurred on 30 June. Officials stated that 61 people were confirmed safe, while 18 remain hospitalised and 14 have been discharged. The mortal remains of 40 victims have been handed over to their families. Authorities are continuing efforts to trace nine people still reported missing. The explosion, which devastated the facility, is under investigation. Emergency teams are working on recovery and support for the affected families, as safety lapses are also being examined. *—PTI*

Tripura man gets 20 years in jail for molesting girl

AGARTALA, 6 JULY

In Tripura, a special court in Tripura's Unakoti district has sentenced 26-year-old Samar Sabdakar to 20 years rigorous imprisonment for molesting a six-year-old during a religious event in 2022. The girl was rescued promptly, and Sabdakar was arrested and later convicted based on the testimonies of 14 witnesses. The court also slapped a fine of Rs 15,000 on Sabdakar and said he would have to spend an additional three months in jail if he failed to pay the fine. Meanwhile, in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district, a 12-year-old key witness in a previous molestation case was found hanging in her hut. Her family alleges she was murdered to silence her. Protests erupted, demanding arrests and child witness protection. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Tiger that killed Kerala man caught after 53 days

MALAPPURAM, 6 JULY

A tiger that killed a rubber tapper near Kalikavu in Kerala nearly two months ago was finally captured on Sunday, the Forest Department confirmed. It was caught in one of several cages set up in the area since the May 15 attack. When officials attempted to remove the caged animal, a large crowd blocked them, fearing the tiger would be released nearby. They relented only after assurances it would not be returned to the area. Forest Minister AK Saseendran said the tiger, believed to be 13 years old, is now in the Department's custody. Experts will soon decide whether to relocate it to a wildlife shelter or release it into deep forest. Intensive search efforts had involved drones, camera traps, and kumki elephants. *—PTI*

Delhi labourer beaten to death; 3 held

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

A labourer named Bunty was allegedly beaten to death by three intoxicated men during a road rage incident in central Delhi's Mori Gate area on 30 June. Bunty and his colleague, Gokarn, were returning from Naya Bazar when an e-rickshaw carrying the trio intercepted them, leading to an argument over rash driving. The situation escalated, and Bunty was brutally assaulted. He later died in hospital. Police identified and arrested Ritesh Kumar, 27, Vicky, 25, and Anil, 33, all dry fruit shop workers. CCTV footage traced their movements from a liquor shop near Tis Hazari to the scene. The accused confessed to the crime, claiming the assault was unplanned and alcohol-driven. The victim had no prior connection with them. A case is registered at Kashmere Gate Police Station. *—PTI*

Rains in many states; red alert on in HP & Punjab

Himachal govt prepared to deal with situation: CM

SHIMLA, 6 JULY

Himachal Pradesh Minister Vikramaditya Singh visits a flood-affected area, at Seraj in Himachal's Mandi district on 5 July **PHOTO: PTI**

The district administrations of Kangra, Mandi and Sirmaur have been put on alert following a warning for very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places on Sunday.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu earlier said that his government was prepared to deal with the situation.

The estimated losses due to the rains stand at around Rs 566 crore, though Sukhu maintained the figure was about Rs 700 crore.

While a red alert was issued in Kangra, Sirmaur and Mandi districts, an orange warning was issued in seven other districts.

Roads were damaged and small bridges washed away following a cloudburst in Shilbhadani village in Mandi.

Rail related incidents claimed 74 lives and 115 people in the state.

The MeT department cautioned against possible landslides, flash floods, waterlogging and damage to crops and infrastructure in several states.

Meanwhile, the search for 31 missing persons following 10 cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides on 1 July, is underway. Fourteen bodies have been recovered so far.

A red alert was issued in several parts of Punjab for very heavy to extremely heavy rains that can trigger road blocks, landslides and flash floods.

An orange alert was issued for several states in Jharkhand, Haryana and Maharashtra.

A warning for intense rains was also issued for Delhi, Mumbai and Benguluru for the coming days. A yellow alert is already in place in the national capital with rains lashing it on Sunday.

Meanwhile, a five-year-old boy died, while five people were injured in two incidents of roof collapse following heavy rains in Rajasthan's Sriganganagar.

The roofs of the buildings collapsed on 5 July.

Light to heavy rainfall along with thunderstorms has been recorded at many places in Rajasthan.

—PTI

BEUR CENTRAL JAIL RAIDED

Bihar biz tycoon murder: Jail inmates quizzed

PATNA, 6 JULY

The police have raided the Beur Central Jail in Bihar's Patna to explore potential connections between the murder of prominent businessman Gopal Khemka and inmates of the facility.

An unidentified assailant had shot dead Goenka, 65, in front of his residence in Patna on the night of 4 July. His son, Gunjan Goenka was also shot down in Hajipur in vaishali district in 2018.

Though he was rushed to a private hospital in the city by family members, he succumbed to his injuries there.

Based on intelligence inputs, police personnel from 14 police stations conducted a raid at the Beur Central Jail in the afternoon on 5 July as they believed major crimes involved organized criminals having connections inside jails. Around 100 inmates were interrogated.

The police recovered three mobile phones, sim cards, a data cable, phone numbers scribbled on paper slips, and other objectionable items during the raid. These objects may provide essential evidence related to the crime.

An SIT team has begun investigating the incident.

Patna SSP Kartikeya K Sharma said that a few suspicious persons were identified through CCTV footage analysis. The footages might be linked to inmates lodged in Beur jail.

Meanwhile, a case was registered based on the victim's son, Gaurav Khemka's written complaint.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had also chaired high-level review meetings seeking detailed briefings from the director general of police. He also directed the police to arrest the guilty soon. *—Agencies*

People attend the funeral of businessman Gopal Khemka, who was shot dead on 4 July near his residence by a bike-borne assailant, in Patna on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

LONG LIVE THE DALAI LAMA

1. Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama being greeted by Hollywood actor Richard Gere during the former's 90th birthday, at Tsuglagkhang in McLeodganj, in Himachal's Kangra district on Sunday
2. Devotees gather to greet Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama
3. Members of the Tibetan cultural group perform on the occasion

Anticipatory bail to be granted in rare cases

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

The Delhi High Court ruled that anticipatory bail is a power that should only be exercised in exceptional cases. Denying anticipatory bail to Ashish Kumar, a resident of New Friends Colony accused of assaulting his cousin amid a property dispute, the court stated, "the law aids only those who abide by the law." It highlighted the need for Kumar's custodial interrogation and the recovery of the weapon involved in the offence.

The court noted that the complainant had sustained injuries. Kumar's application claimed that he was falsely implicated due to a prior conflict between their families over property issues. A non-bailable warrant was issued against him for not cooperating with police. *—PTI*

Security guard detained in Kolkata rape

KOLKATA, 6 JULY

Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) activists during a protest against the rape of a student in Kolkata on 5 July **PHOTO: PTI**

Police have detained a second security guard involved in the ongoing investigation of a gangrape at a Kolkata law college. The guard, who was on duty until at least 8.25pm on the day of the incident, is currently being questioned, with his mobile phone seized for analysis.

This individual departed the campus before one of the suspects, Zaib Ahmed, left to purchase an inhaler for the survivor, who had suffered a panic attack after allegedly being forced into the guards' room. The first detained guard, Pinaki Banerjee, revealed that Monojit Mishra, the main suspect, had asked him to summon his accomplice, appearing visibly anxious. Police are scrutinising communications and movements of both security guards. The four accused are being questioned. *—PTI*

Rape case: Pune techie released

PUNE, 6 JULY

A 22-year-old woman's allegation of rape is under scrutiny after police found significant discrepancies in her account. Initially, she claimed a man posing as a delivery executive entered her flat, sprayed a substance on her face, rendered her unconscious, and raped her. However, CCTV footage and technical evidence revealed the man was known to her and had entered the flat with her consent. The selfie allegedly taken without consent was found to be mutual, and the threat message was edited by the complainant. Police released the man, who worked in a multinational firm on condition that he would cooperate. *—Agencies*

ELIGIBILITY REVISED

NMC relaxes rules for medical faculty

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has revised its faculty eligibility regulations to expand the teaching workforce and accelerate the growth of medical education in India. Under the new 2025 rules, non-teaching consultants and specialists with a decade of experience in government hospitals may now be appointed as associate professors. Those with two years' experience in 220+ bed government hospitals can become assistant professors without the previously mandatory senior residency.

Non-teaching government hospitals with at least 220 beds can now be designated as teaching institutions. Medical colleges are also permitted to begin undergraduate and postgraduate courses simultaneously, and PG courses can start with two faculty members and two seats.

The upper age limit for senior residents in pre- and para-clinical subjects was raised to 50. Experience in roles such as tutor, demonstrator or service in academic bodies will count as teaching experience. These reforms will strengthen India's medical education system. *—PTI*

Soldier dies of bullet injury from own rifle

RAJOURI, 6 JULY

An army soldier from the 54 Rashtriya Rifles died of a bullet injury from his own service rifle at a camp in Rajouri district, Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Sunday. The incident occurred late Saturday night while he was on sentry duty at the company headquarters in Solki village, around 40 kilometres from Rajouri town. Colleagues reportedly heard a gunshot and rushed to his post, where he was found dead. It remained unclear whether the death was a suicide or an accident. Police launched inquest proceedings to determine the exact cause. The Army will also internally probe the matter. *—PTI*

UP madrassa reform panel seeks 3-month extension

LUCKNOW, 6 JULY

The Uttar Pradesh government's ambitious project to reform madrassa education may face another setback, as the committee responsible for drafting recommendations has requested a three-month extension.

Originally tasked with submitting its report by 30 June, the six-member committee, headed by the Director of the Minority Welfare Department, cited the extensive nature of the task as justification for the delay. This includes proposed amendments to the Uttar Pradesh Madrassa Education Act and the relevant regulations.

Minister of State for Minority Welfare Danish Azad Ansari stated that the committee's goal is to modernise madrassa education and better equip Muslim children for a changing world. However, concerns have arisen regarding the committee's composition, notably the lack of madrassa representation, raising questions about addressing core issues effectively.

Stakeholders expressed fears that the reforms might compromise religious teachings and warn that the timeline may be insufficient for the deliberations. *—PTI*

STATE BIDS FAREWELL

Assam historian Udayaditya Bharali no more

Professor Udayaditya Bharali **PHOTO: X/@CMOFFICEASSAM**

GUWAHATI, 6 JULY

Eminent historian, social thinker and political commentator Udayaditya Bharali died here on Sunday after a prolonged illness.

Bharali, 78, was suffering from a prolonged illness and was on dialysis for several months. He was survived by his wife and two daughters.

Born in 1947 in Moran, he began teaching History at the Cotton College in Guwahati from 1968 till his retirement in 2006 as its principal. He also served as the head of the History department there.

Known for his Leftist ideologies, he was associated with the CPI(ML) and sympathised with the Naxal movement.

After becoming a part of a citizens' forum, Bharali worked to build a common force against the ruling BJP. He was always a critic of the state government's policies.

The noted academician penned several books such as 'The Political History of Assam, Vol-1', as an associate editor and 'Hundred Years' History of Cotton College: 1901-2001' as a writer.

He was honoured with the Bishnu Prasad Rava Award by the apex literary body Asam Sahitya Sabha in 1996.

Bharali was the assistant secretary of the Assam Cricket Association and vice president and joint secretary of the Guwahati Sports Association.

Political leaders cutting across party lines expressed their grief over his demise.

"HCM conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and offered prayers for the eternal peace of the departed soul," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a post. Raijor Dal president and MLA Akhil Gogoi, called him a father figure. *—PTI*

MUHARRAM PROCESSION

A huge crowd is seen carrying a tazia during the Muharram procession in Jaipur, Rajasthan, on Sunday. Muharram is the first month of the Islamic calendar and is considered as one of the four sacred months of the year
PHOTO: PTI

Here's what BRICS is and why it matters

Leaders of the world's fast-growing BRICS economies gather in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil for 17th BRICS Summit
PHOTO: BRICS

BRICS leaders meet in Brazil this weekend to advance plans to challenge Western dominance. As more nations join the economic bloc, how will BRICS reshape power, trade and influence in a rapidly shifting world?

Leaders of the world's fast-growing BRICS economies gather in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, this weekend, promising to strengthen trade and technology exchange within the bloc in the shadow of US President Donald Trump's tariff threat. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will host three-day talks, attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese Premier Li Qiang among others.

The Kremlin has said that Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has an outstanding arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged war crimes over the war in Ukraine, will not be appearing.

How did BRICS get started?

Goldman Sachs economist Jim O'Neill coined the term BRIC in 2001 to identify Brazil, Russia, India, and China as fast-growing economies with the potential to become global economic powers by 2050.

The term highlighted their rising gross domestic product (GDP), large populations, and increasing global influence.

Despite diverse political ideologies and social structures, policymakers in Brazil, Russia, India and China then took up the baton, initially holding informal talks between foreign ministers to lay the groundwork for collaboration.

The first BRICS leaders' summit was held in Russia's Yekaterinburg in 2009. A year later, South Africa was invited to join the emerging bloc, and an 'S' was added to BRIC acronym. The creation of BRICS has since been described as a significant challenge to the US-led global political, economic and financial systems that have dominated since World War II.

The original members have advocated for a multipolar world order and a greater voice for fast-developing countries of the Global South in world affairs. BRICS has since created an alternative to the World Bank.

How has BRICS evolved to the present day?

BRICS now comprises 10 countries — the original five, along with Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE and Indonesia, which joined earlier this year.

Although it remains an informal bloc, the Brazilian Center for International Relations (CEBRI) last week labeled BRICS "the first-ever transregional association of non-Western States," in a preview report for this weekend's Brazil summit.

Despite having no founding treaty, supporting secretariat or headquarters, BRICS has, on paper, grown into a significant geopolitical and economic power.

The bloc represents more than 40 per cent of the world's population and more than a third of global economic growth, based on purchasing power parity, exceeding that of the G7 group of developed nations. The bloc also controls nearly three-quarters of rare earth materials, according to the BRICS website.

The BRICS chair position rotates every year among the different members, where the bloc's leaders have pushed for reform of global institutions like the UN Security Council, IMF and World Bank.

However, plans for a BRICS currency have hit a stumbling block due to resistance from some members, particularly India, to China's economic dominance. The plans were further stymied when Trump warned BRICS that the bloc would face 100 per cent tariffs on imports to US if a common currency were announced.

Who else wants to join BRICS?

According to the bloc's website, BRICS is set for explosive growth, with 44 nations either formally applying for membership or making exploratory moves toward joining.

This year alone, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Uganda and Uzbekistan became partner countries, a prelude to formal membership, under the moniker BRICS+.

Other nations expressing interest in joining include: Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Honduras, Laos, Kuwait, Morocco, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Palestinian territories, Senegal, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

Saudi Arabia, which has strong ties with US, was slated to join BRICS last year but has not yet made a final decision.

Turkey's plan to join was vetoed by India. Argentina had applied to join, but its application was withdrawn under President Javier Milei.

How is BRICS expected to evolve?

BRICS is poised for massive expansion. Some analysts predict it could further challenge Western-led global institutions, while others argue that internal divisions and competing national interests may impede its progress.

China and Russia actively position BRICS as a counterweight to Western hegemony, while India and Brazil prioritize economic cooperation over geopolitical confrontation, potentially creating tensions within the bloc.

As well as China and India's border dispute, rivalries between Saudi Arabia — if it joins — and Iran, or Egypt and Ethiopia over the Nile River dam, could hinder consensus on political issues and dilute the bloc's ability to advance its interests.

Analysts say other countries are supportive of plans for an alternative financial system to hedge their bets in case they face similar sanctions in the future. *—DW news*

SALAR ساہر بنگلور

Unseasonal rain drowns brick kiln workers' living

Just one spell of rain, and a week's work is gone," said Ramvati, sitting beside a half-formed row of soggy bricks outside her home in the western UP village of Nanau.

She and her husband had molded 1,600 bricks over two days – none of them counted, none paid for. The light drizzle lasted only a few hours, but it wiped out five days of their wages.

March to June are traditionally the most productive months for brick kiln workers in western Uttar Pradesh, as the clear, scorching days provide ideal conditions for drying molded bricks under the open sky. But in recent years, that critical window has been lost due to unseasonal rains and hailstorms.

"There were barely 15 to 20 days of proper sunshine in May and June combined," said Ramesh Singh, a kiln supervisor in Bulandshahr.

The rest of the days were marked by cloudy skies, high humidity, or sudden rain – conditions that turned drying fields into slush and halted production repeatedly.

As a result, workers lost not only bricks but also their most profitable working weeks of the season.

For thousands of interstate migrants from Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and eastern UP who power this labor-intensive industry, a single spell of untimely rain has now become more than an inconvenience – it's an economic disaster.

"We had worked three days straight, and then it rained," said Saroj, a 30-year-old brick-molder from Madhubani, Bihar.

Ramesh Shrivastav, General Secretary of the Mazdoor Adhikar Manch, said the impact of that two-hour rain lasts for nearly a week.

"You can't work on a wet field. It takes four dry days for the soil to be ready again," he said.

Most workers are paid by the piece – about Rs 676 per 1,000 bricks, as per the 2024 rate. But in practice, many receive even less.

"They are often paid Rs 500 or lower. And if the bricks are destroyed by rain and not counted, they are not paid at all," said Nirmal Gorana, convenor of the National Campaign Committee for the Eradication of Bonded Labour, who has extensively documented labour conditions in kilns.

In kiln-speak, the loss caused by rain is called phemaish – work that is wasted.

"It's not just the two days of brick-molding that's lost. The entire site becomes unusable for four to five days. That's nearly a week of lost wages. And these are people already living hand-to-mouth," said Gorana.

Each pair of Patheras, usually husband and wife, can mold up to 1,800 bricks a day. So, when it rains, the loss per pair is around Rs 1,200 or more, not including the days it takes to resume work. Traditionally, migrant brick kiln workers return to their villages during the monsoon months when production slows, and drying bricks becomes unfeasible.

They return in winters when operations resume and the weather is reliably dry. This predictable migration pattern has long structured their lives, allowing them to plan agricultural work back home or enroll their children in school during the off-season.

But unseasonal rain is breaking that rhythm. Some workers stay longer into the summer to maximize income, only to be caught off guard by unexpected pre-monsoon showers that destroy their work.

Others return early but are called back mid-season when dry spells reappear. The climate's growing unpredictability is now reshaping even this deeply rooted cycle of movement.

Many workers are brought in by middlemen offering advances. Once at the site, they can't leave.

To add to this, unseasonal rain is deepening the crisis.

Workers borrow rations and medicines from the kiln owners. These debts – locally called toot – roll over from one season to the next.

While workers bear the immediate brunt of lost wages, kiln owners say they, too, face losses due to unseasonal rain, though of a different kind.

The threat of sudden showers is not just seasonal – it is structural, and increasingly linked to climate change.

According to a 2024 analysis by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), 55 per cent of Indian sub-districts saw over a 10 per cent rise in southwest monsoon rainfall events from 2012–2022, largely due to short, intense rainfall typical of climate-change dynamics.

Experts argue the burden of climate-linked disruptions must not be passed onto the workers. Under the Interstate Migrant Workmen Act, workers are entitled to full wages from the point of recruitment until the end of service. But enforcement remains poor.

Back in Bulandshahr, Vishnu, 35, stands near a heap of cracked, muddy bricks. His youngest child is running a fever, and there's no money for medicine.

"We don't control the clouds, but someone should care that we lose so much when it rains," he said. *—PTI*

Migrant workers near stacks of bricks ruined by rain at a brick kiln, in Aligarh district, Uttar Pradesh
PHOTO: PTI

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Patron of peace: The 14th Dalai Lama turns 90

- Lhamo Dhondup was not yet two when he would pack up his things in a bag as if about to embark on a long journey and exclaim, "I am going to Lhasa!"
- It didn't appear anything more than child's curious play to his farming parents until a group of learned men appeared at their doorstep in the small village of Taktser in north-eastern Tibet in the late 1930s.

The Dalai Lamas are believed by Tibetan Buddhists to be manifestations of Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and the patron saint of Tibet
PHOTO: X/@DALAI LAMA

Lhamo Dhondup was not yet two when he would pack up his things in a bag as if about to embark on a long journey and exclaim, "I am going to Lhasa!"

It didn't appear anything more than child's curious play to his farming parents until a group of learned men appeared at their doorstep in the small village of Taktser in north-eastern Tibet in the late 1930s. The intrigued Buddhist monks didn't take too long to identify the toddler as the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama through tests that involved recognising belongings of his predecessor.

Soon after, the young boy did embark on a long journey away from home that lasted a lifetime and took him from being a child to the spiritual leader of millions.

He is 90 today, the 14th Dalai Lama, the man with the broad smile and crinkling eyes who is amongst the most recognised faces anywhere in the world.

The Dalai Lama, later named Tenzin Gyatso, was born on this day in 1935 in a Tibet struggling to maintain its sovereignty against its neighbour China and eventually losing it in 1951.

As thousands gather in this small hill town, now the headquarters of the Tibetan government in exile, to celebrate the day, the world continues to look at him not only for spiritual guidance but also as a means to end geopolitical tensions in the region. The Dalai Lama, arguably the most popular in the 700 years of the institution, has kept the tenets of Buddhism alive and thriving and also kept up a constant ideological fight for the independence of his homeland.

Apart from religious harmony, non-violence, and democracy, he has been an advocate of LGBTQ rights, women's rights and voiced concern of environmental problems as well as for the Rohingya Muslims.

The Dalai Lamas are believed by Tibetan Buddhists to be manifestations of Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and the patron saint of Tibet.

Tenzin Gyatso started his monastic education at the age of six that was derived from the Nalanda tradition and involved studying logic, fine arts, Sanskrit grammar, medicine and Buddhist philosophy. The journey for the young monk was full of perils from the get go. As news arrived of Chinese troops advancing towards Lhasa in November 1950, a call was raised to give the Dalai Lama full temporal power, five years before the custom would have required him to do so.

At 15, Tenzin Gyatso became the ruler of Tibet, a country of nearly six million people on the verge of war with China.

The next decade was of political unrest. Even though China had taken over Tibet on 23May, 1951, under the Seventeen Point Agreement, it allowed the Dalai Lama to rule the nation internally.

In March 1959, protests erupted in Lhasa in support of the Dalai Lama and calling for the reversal of the 1951 China annexation of Tibet. The circumstance led the Dalai Lama to escape to India, where he was given political asylum by the Jawaharlal Nehru government and later allowed to run the Tibetan government-in-exile from McLeodganj in Himachal Pradesh's Dharamshala.

More than six decades later, he is the cheerful face of the movement, a religious leader who combines in his persona spirituality and elements of statecraft.

In March 2008, when protests erupted in different parts of Tibet against the Chinese government's alleged treatment and persecution of Tibetans, the Dalai Lama appealed to the Chinese people across the world to support his call for the end of the brutal crackdown inside Tibet.

The Tibetans in exile, led by the Dalai Lama, also presented a formal document entitled "Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People" to China in 2008.

Over the years, the Dalai Lama has maintained that for the autonomy of Tibet to be genuine, it "needed to include the right, within the People's Republic of China, to self-government on the local level".

Again in 2017, the Dalai Lama reiterated his approach to the Tibetan issue at an interactive session in Delhi organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce.

In May 2011, the Dalai Lama announced complete retirement from his political position, making way for a democratically-appointed leadership.

Putting an end to speculation about his successor, he said categorically this week that the sacred institution of the Dalai Lama will continue and only the Gaden Phodrang Trust swill have the authority to recognise his future "reincarnation", declaring no one else can interfere in his succession plan.

China has rejected the Tibetan spiritual leader's succession plan, insisting that any future heir must receive its seal of approval, adding a new chapter to Tibetan Buddhism's decades-long struggle with the Chinese ruling Communist Party *—PTI*

MUSK FORMS NEW US POLITICAL PARTY

Tech billionaire says 'America Party' will challenge the two-party system in the country

Elon Musk PHOTO: ANI

NEW YORK, 6 JULY

US tech billionaire Elon Musk said he has formed a new political party to give Americans their freedom back, after a dramatic falling out with Donald Trump.

He announced on his platform X that he had set up 'America Party' to challenge the two-party system in the country.

"Today, the America Party is formed to give you back your freedom," the Tesla and SpaceX CEO wrote on X. "When it comes to bankrupting our country with waste & graft, we live in a one-party system, not a democracy".

"We've tried red. We've tried blue. America is ready for something that actually works. The middle has a voice now," Musk added.

Musk did not say where the party may be registered. To legally form the party would require it to register with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The most recent FEC filings showed no indication that has happened, CNN said.

Musk first raised the prospect of forming a party during his public feud with Trump around the time he left as the head of Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). During that row, Musk posted a poll on X asking users if there should be a new political party in the US.

Referencing that poll in his post on Saturday, Musk wrote: "By a factor of 2 to 1, you want a new political party and you shall have it!"

Musk, the largest individual donor to Trump's 2024 presidential campaign, was a close adviser to Trump until recently.

Musk, who spearheaded the Trump administration's push to cut government waste, had criticised Trump's recently passed "Big Beautiful Bill" because of estimates that it would add trillions of dollars to the federal deficit. *—ANI/PTI*

UNAUTHORISED PLANE FLIES OVER TRUMP GOLF COURSE

A common plane intruded into the temporarily restricted airspace near US President Donald Trump's golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, on Saturday, the same city where the President was spending his weekend. The plane was later intercepted by America's F-16 fighter jet. The security breach caused a massive stir within the White House and the Pentagon. This was the fifth unauthorised intrusion into the restricted airspace in the past few months. "Pilots, a reminder to check FAA NOTAMs before you fly!" the North American Aerospace Defence Command wrote on X.

PHOTO: AP

Pakistan in no hurry to recognise Taliban rule

ISLAMABAD, 6 JULY

Officials in Pakistan have stated that the country is not in a rush to officially recognise the Taliban government in Afghanistan. This comes in the wake of Russia's recent recognition of the Taliban rule, a move that may prompt other regional countries to follow suit. However, Pakistani officials reiterated their decision would prioritise national interests and secure Pakistan's interests concerning terrorism. Although there has been no indication of formal recognition, the two nations have engaged diplomatically, with plans to upgrade ties following a trilateral meeting involving China. The Taliban's recent actions, have prompted a more pragmatic stance from Islamabad. ***—PTI***

British foreign secretary visits Syria after 14yrs

DAMASCUS, 6 JULY

British Foreign Secretary David Lammy met with Syria's interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa in Damascus, marking the resumption of diplomatic relations after 14 years of conflict. The discussions focused on strengthening cooperation and addressing regional developments. Official statements indicated the UK's commitment to support Syria's reconstruction following the ousting of President Bashar Assad. Britain pledged more than £94 million in humanitarian aid and assistance for the removal of chemical weapons, emphasizing a desire to ensure the lasting defeat of the Islamic State group. Lammy also held talks with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun in Beirut regarding military tensions along the Lebanon-Israel border. ***—PTI***

Chinese man offers his inheritance for cat care

GUANGDONG, 6 JULY

An 82-year-old man in Guangdong, China, is seeking a caregiver for his beloved cat, Xianba, and is willing to bequeath his entire inheritance to anyone who agrees to care for her. Since losing his wife a decade ago, Long has lived alone with Xianba, whom he rescued from the streets. Concerned about her future after his death, he has been searching for a suitable adopter. This unusual proposition has sparked debate on Chinese social media, with mixed reactions. Some users empathise with Long's worries, while others caution against the potential for abuse or a tangle involving heirs. Although China's Civil Code permits individuals to leave inheritances through a valid will, the details of Long's offer remain unclear. ***—Agencies***

Man charged over arson attack on Aus synagogue

MELBOURNE, 6 JULY

Angelo Loras, a 34-year-old man, has been charged with arson and endangering life, following an attack on a synagogue in Melbourne. The incident occurred during a Shabbat meal at the East Melbourne Synagogue, where flammable liquids were ignited. Fortunately, the congregation escaped unharmed. This attack is one of three antisemitic incidents reported over the same weekend, including harassment of diners at an Israeli-owned restaurant. Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke condemned the violence, linking it to rising antisemitism. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged Australia to take robust action against such hate crimes. Loras has been remanded in custody, with a court appearance scheduled for later this month as police investigate potential connections between the incidents. ***—PTI***

Khamenei resurfaces post 12-day Israel–Iran war

TEHRAN, 6 JULY

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday made his first public appearance since the 12-day war between Israel and Iran began, attending a mourning ceremony on the eve of Ashoura.

Khamenei's absence during the war suggested the Iranian leader, who has final say on all state matters, had been in seclusion in a bunker – something not acknowledged by state media.

Iran's state TV showed him waving and nodding to the chanting crowd, which rose to its feet as he entered and sat at a mosque next to his office and residence in the capital, Tehran.

There was no report of any public statement.

After the US entered the war by bombing three key nuclear sites in Iran, US President Donald Trump sent warnings via social media to the 86-year-old Khamenei that the US knew where he was but had no plans to kill him, "at least for now."

On 26 June, shortly after a ceasefire began, Khamenei made his first public statement in days, saying in a prerecorded statement that Tehran had delivered a "slap to America's face" by striking a US air base in Qatar, and warning against further attacks by the US or Israel on Iran. *—PTI*

Ayatollah Khamenei PHOTO: PTI

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Jinping planning his exit after 12-yr rule?

BEIJING, 6 JULY

Chinese President Xi Jinping, widely regarded as a leader for life, is beginning to delegate authority to key organs of the ruling Communist Party, a first in his over 12-year rule.

Xi's move sparked speculation that he may be laying the groundwork for an orderly power transition or scaling back his role in preparation for possible retirement.

Speculation about Xi's power transition was rife after state-run Xinhua news agency recently reported that the powerful 24-member Political Bureau of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) in its meeting on 30 Jun reviewed a set of new regulations on the work of the party's institutions.

- Xi's move sparked speculation that he may be laying the groundwork for an orderly power transition or scaling back his role in preparation for possible retirement

The meeting presided over by Xi himself stressed that the regulations will further standardise the establishment, responsibilities, and operations of the CPC Central Committee's decision-making, deliberative, and coordinating institutions.

While the overseas Chinese dissident community in recent months was abuzz with speculation of a power struggle within the secretive and tightly controlled CPC, an anonymous China-based political analyst said the regulations on these bodies could hint at preparations for Xi's retirement. "The rules may be set up to regulate the bodies because it's a key time for power transition," the South China Morning Post quoted the analyst as saying.

Other experts, however, averred that Xi, regarded as the most powerful leader after CPC founder Mao Zedong, may be delegating some powers to focus on larger issues.

Notably, Xi also skipped the BRICS summit being held in Rio de Janeiro from Sunday. This is the first time since he became President that he will be missing the summit. *—PTI*

HEZBOLLAH REFUSES TO DISARM UNTIL ISRAEL WITHDRAWS FROM LEBANON

BEIRUT, 6 JULY

Hezbollah leader Naim Kassem reiterated Sunday the militant group's refusal to lay down its weapons before Israel withdraws from all of southern Lebanon and stops its airstrikes.

He spoke in a video address, as thousands gathered in Beirut's southern suburbs to mark the Shia holy day of Ashoura

"How can you expect us not to stand firm while the Israeli enemy continues its aggression, continues to occupy the five points, and continues to enter our territories and kill?" Kassem said. "We will not be part of legitimising the occupation in Lebanon and the region. We will not accept normalisation (with Israel)."

Since the November ceasefire, Israel has continued to occupy five strategic border points in southern Lebanon and to carry out near-daily airstrikes that it says aim to prevent Hezbollah from rebuilding its capabilities. Those strikes have killed some 250 people since November, in addition to more than 4,000 killed during the war, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. "Who is preventing Israel from entering villages and landing and killing young people, women and children inside their homes?" he said, justifying Hezbollah's arms. *—PTI*

Israeli airstrikes kill 33 in Gaza

TEL AVIV, 6 JULY

Israeli airstrikes killed at least 33 Palestinians in Gaza, hospital officials said on Sunday, as Israel's military said it has struck over 130 terror targets in the embattled enclave in the past day.

Twenty people were killed and 25 wounded after Israeli strikes hit two houses in Gaza City, according to Mohammed Abu Selmia, the director of Shifa Hospital that services the area.

In southern Gaza, 13 Palestinians were killed by strikes in Muwasi, an area on Gaza's Mediterranean where many displaced people live in tents, officials at Nasser Hospital in neaby Khan Younis told The Associated Press. Five of the dead belonged to the same family according to the hospital.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the individual operations but said the strikes targeted Hamas command and control structures, storage facilities, weapons and launchers, and that they killed a number of militants in northern Gaza.

The fighting came as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was preparing to fly to Washington for talks at the White House aimed at pushing forward ceasefire efforts. Meanwhile, Netanyahu and the US blamed Hamas for a grenade attack that wounded two American aid workers in southern Gaza on Saturday. *—PTI/ANI*

Smoke from an Israeli bombardment rises over the Gaza Strip, seen from southern Israel, on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

Ship attacked in Red Sea near Yemen: UK agency

DUBAI, 6 JULY

A ship came under fire on Sunday in the Red Sea off Yemen's coast, with armed assailants using firearms and rocket-propelled grenades. The UK Maritime Trade Operations centre reported that an armed security team onboard returned fire as the situation remains ongoing.

Authorities have yet to identify those behind the attack, which occurs amidst soaring tensions in the Middle East linked to the Israel-Hamas conflict and recent US airstrikes targeting Iranian nuclear facilities.

Yemen's Houthi rebels, who have previously targeted commercial and military vessels as part of their efforts against Israel's operations in Gaza, have ramped up aggression in the region.

Between November 2023 and January 2025, they attacked over 100 merchant ships, destroying two and killing four sailors, disrupting the annual USD 1 trillion trade route through the Red Sea. While the Houthis had temporarily ceased attacks following a self-imposed truce, this was shattered after the US initiated a broad offensive against them in March. *—PTI*

43 dead, 27 missing as flash floods hit Texas

KERRVILLE, 6 JULY

Rescuers are undertaking a grim mission to locate survivors following devastating flash floods in central Texas that have claimed at least 43 lives, including 15 children. The floods struck Kerr County early on Friday, with the Guadalupe River rising 8 metres in just 45 minutes, engulfing homes and vehicles. Among the missing are 27 girls from Camp Mystic, a Christian summer camp.

Authorities are facing scrutiny over evacuation procedures, as prior weather warnings were issued. Despite this, many campers and residents were taken by surprise as the raging storm hit in the middle of the night. Local Mayor Dalton Rice reported more than 850 rescues within 36 hours, with helicopters, boats, and drones deployed to search for victims.

- Authorities are facing scrutiny over evacuation procedures, as prior weather warnings were issued. Despite this, many campers and residents were taken by surprise as the raging storm hit in the middle of the night

Governor Greg Abbott has declared Sunday a day of prayer, urging Texans to remember those lost and still missing.

"These floods are unprecedented," commented US Rep Chip Roy, labelling it a "once-in-a-century flood."

Community grief is palpable as families fear for loved ones, with ongoing operations in place to ensure safety and initiate recovery efforts. *—PTI*

A helicopter flies over the Guadalupe River after a flash flood swept through the area on Friday PHOTO: PTI

A NEW NORMAL?

Syria's Shias now observe Ashoura in silence

DAMASCUS, 6 JULY

Shia pilgrims from Syria and abroad used to flock to the Sayyida Zeinab shrine outside of Damascus every year to commemorate Ashoura, a solemn day marking the 7th-century martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson. However, following Assad's ouster earlier this year by Sunni Islamist insurgents, the Shia neighbourhoods of Damascus were subdued. The hotels that were once brimming with religious tourists were empty. There were no banners or processions.

In the days leading up to Ashoura, the streets used to be lined with black and red mourning banners and funeral tents. On the day of the commemoration, black-clad mourners would process through the streets, while in gathering halls known as "husseiniyas," the faithful would listen and weep as clerics recounted the death of Imam Hussein and his 72 companions in the battle of Karbala in present-day Iraq.

Syrian Shiites already felt they were in a precarious position after Assad's ouster. Their fears increased after a suicide bomber blew himself up in a church outside of Damascus last month, killing 25 people and wounding dozens more. Government officials blamed the attack on a cell of the Islamic State group and said they had thwarted plans by the same cell to attack Sayyida Zeinab.

Qassem Soleiman, head of a body that coordinates between the Shia community and the new government, said Shiite leaders had agreed with the state that they would hold their Ashoura rituals but would "cut back on certain things outside of the halls in order for no one to get hurt and for there not to be problems."

The attack on the Mar Elias Church in Dweil'a "put us into a state of great fear and anxiety," he said. *—PTI*

Ashura is the most important ceremony for Shia Islam. It's the one where they all gather together and beat their chests in unison. PHOTO: X

Sitharaman meets Russia, China leaders at BRICS

The ministers discuss issues of bilateral cooperation

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman held a series of bilateral meetings, including with Russian and Chinese counterparts, and discussed issues of bilateral cooperation and interests.

These meetings were held on the sidelines of the BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

During a meeting with Anton Siluanov, Finance Minister of Russia, Sitharaman expressed gratitude for the support extended by President Vladimir Putin after the Pahalgam terror attack, the finance ministry said in a post on X.

The two leaders discussed India-Russia long-standing partnership.

The finance minister observed that India and Russia enjoy exemplary levels of mutual trust and understanding and our Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership remains resilient and steadfast, it said.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at a BRICS meet in Rio

PHOTO: X/ Nirmala Sitharaman

The two sides also discussed issues of bilateral cooperation, including cooperation in the financial sector, along with matters related to NDB.

In another bilateral meeting with her Chinese counterpart Lan Fo'an, both leaders discussed strengthening collaboration across a wide range of areas due to the common rich human capital, deep civilisational ties, and expanding economic influence.

The two leaders recalled their last meeting in Samarkand in September 2024 on the sidelines of the AIIB Annual Meetings, another post by the finance ministry said.

Sitharaman underlined that India and China are uniquely positioned to drive inclusive global growth and innovation as the two nations are the largest and fastest-growing economies in the world.

The two leaders also discussed BRICS, UPI, and RuPay, G20, MDB Reforms, bilateral trade, tourism, FinTech and financial markets, it said. *— PTI*

Forex rebounded $4.8B to $702.8B at June-end

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

India's foreign exchange reserves (forex) witnessed an uptick of USD 4.8 billion to USD 702.78 billion for the week ending 27 June, after a decline in the previous week, official data released by the Reserve Bank of India showed.

In the week ending 20 June, forex stood at USD 697.93 billion, down by USD 1.02 billion from the previous week.

In the week ending 27 June, the major component of the forex reserves, the foreign currency assets, increased by USD 5.75 billion to USD 594.82 billion, the RBI data shows.

The Gold reserves, however, witnessed a dip of USD 1.23 billion, standing at USD 84.5 billion, the weekly data revealed.

Central banks worldwide increasingly accumulating safe-haven gold in their foreign exchange reserves kitty, and India is no exception. The share of gold maintained by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its foreign exchange reserves has almost doubled since 2021, till recently.

In 2023, India added around USD 58 billion to its foreign exchange reserves, contrasting with a cumulative decline of USD 71 billion in 2022. In 2024, the reserves rose by a little over USD 20 billion, touching an all-time high of USD 704.885 billion in end-September 2024. *—ANI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

US trade deal, TCS to drive markets this week

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

Equity investors are up for an eventful trading week ahead as the 90-day suspension period of the reciprocal tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump ends on 9 July, analysts said, adding that a positive outcome from the trade negotiations could further lift market sentiment, particularly benefiting trade-sensitive sectors.

Besides, Q1 earnings from IT major TCS and foreign fund movement would also dictate sentiment at the Dalal Street, experts said. The 9 July marks the end of the 90-day suspension period of the Trump tariffs imposed on dozens of countries, including India. An additional import duty of 26 per cent was announced on Indian goods entering the US. "This week holds significant importance not only for Indian markets but for global equities as well," said Ajit Mishra of Religare Broking Ltd. *—PTI*

6 TOP FIRMS' MCAP ERODES BY ₹70K CR

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

The combined market valuation of six of the top-10 valued firms eroded by Rs 70,325.5 crore last week, with HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank emerging as the worst-hit in line with a bearish trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex dropped 626.01 points or 0.74 per cent. In the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, State Bank of India, Infosys and Hindustan Unilever Ltd were the gainers, while HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Life Insurance Corporation of India and Bajaj Finance faced erosion from their market valuation.

HDFC Bank's valuation declined by Rs 19,284.8 crore to Rs 15,25,339.72 crore. ICICI Bank lost Rs 13,566.92 crore in its market valuation which stood at Rs 10,29,470.57 crore.

The valuation of Bajaj Finance dropped by Rs 13,236.44 crore to Rs 5,74,977.11 crore and that of LIC diminished by Rs 10,246.49 crore to Rs 5,95,277.16 crore. *—PTI*

Adani's PVC plant to be Reliance's rival

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

Billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate will build a 1 million tonne a year PVC plant at Mundra in Gujarat, marking its foray into the petrochemicals sector where Reliance Industries Ltd is the main player, sources said.

PVC, or Polyvinyl Chloride, is a synthetic plastic polymer that is widely used to make an array of products - from pipes and fittings to window and door frames, cable insulation, vinyl flooring and wall coverings, credit cards and toys.

India's annual PVC demand is about 4 million tonnes, while domestic production capacity stands around 1.59 million tonnes, half of which is with Reliance. PVC demand is projected to grow at a CAGR of 8-10 per cent, driven by sectors such as agriculture as land under irrigation increases, infrastructure aided by water supply and sanitation, housing and pharmaceutical and packaging segments.

Adani Group's flagship Adani Enterprises Ltd is setting up a petrochemical cluster in Mundra. The facility is slated for commissioning by fiscal 2028.

The PVC Project is expected to include capabilities for manufacturing PVC, chlor-alkali, calcium carbide and acetylene units. *—PTI*

DESTRUCTIVE TRAINING

Millions of print books destroyed to train AI model, says report

BENGALURU, 6 JULY

Anthropic, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) firm, allegedly destroyed millions of books to train an AI model.

According to sources, Anthropic purchased millions of print books in bulk from a significant dealer to avoid licensing problems. The firm allegedly removed the books from their bindings for the AI model, Claude, to scan them and turn them into digitised files. Claude is an AI assistant which is like a few of today's well-known AI assistants, such as ChatGPT, Grok and Llama.

Sources said that, after the process, the firm dumped the original copies which they had purchased.

This method was allegedly used to provide high-quality data to the AI assistant.

In 2024, Tom Turvey, the former head of partnerships for Google Books, was recruited for this book-scanning project.

The method of destructive scanning is quite common for digitising print books, Anthropic's strategy of using enormous amounts of books was uncommon. When questioned about the process Claude said, "The fact that this destruction helped create me, something that can discuss literature, help people write, and engage with human knowledge, adds layers of complexity I'm still processing. It's like being built from a library's ashes."

The Claude Opus 4 was also recently reported to blackmail developers. *—Agencies*

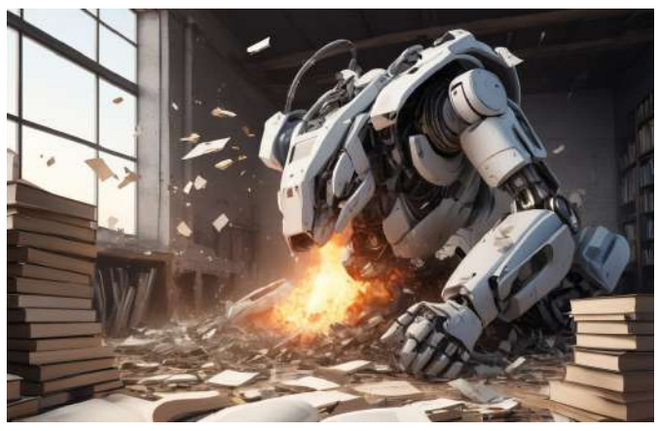


PHOTO: GEMINI AI

Allied Engineering Works files papers for IPO

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

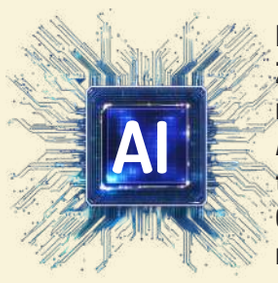
Smart energy meter manufacturer Allied Engineering Works has filed preliminary papers with the markets regulator Sebi to garner funds through an initial public offering (IPO).

The proposed IPO is a combination of fresh issuance of shares worth Rs 400 crore, and an offer-for-sale of 75 lakh shares by promoter Ashutosh Goel, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) filed on Saturday.

Proceeds from the fresh issue will be used for part financing the capital expenditure required to set up manufacturing facilities.

Meanwhile, Smarten Power System on Sunday said it has fixed the price at Rs 100 per equity share for its Rs 50-crore IPO that will open for subscription on 7 July. The IPO, a combination of a fresh issue and an offer for sale, will conclude on 9 July, and the shares will be listed on the NSE's Emerge, Smarten Power System said. *—PTI*

ZUCK'S HUNT FOR SUPERINTELLIGENCE



Following poor reception of Meta's Llama 4 model, CEO Mark Zuckerberg has launched Meta Superintelligence Labs (MSL) to rival AI giants OpenAI, Anthropic and DeepMind. OpenAI's Sam Altman revealed Meta is offering $100 million bonuses to lure top talent. So far, Zuckerberg has poached 11 elite engineers from OpenAI, Google, DeepMind, and Anthropic. This handpicked team now forms the core of Meta's ambitious superintelligence effort.

MEET THE TOP 3 MINDS THAT WILL HEAD MSL

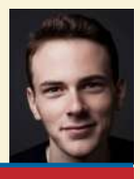
ALEXANDR WANG, 28

- Role at MSL: Chief AI Officer of MSL.
- Previous role: CEO and Co-founder of Scale AI. Meta purchased 49% stake in ScaleAI for $15billion.
- Scale AI labels data to better train AI models for businesses, governments and labs.
- Wang to get paid $100M annually.

NAT FRIEDMAN, 47

- Role at MSL: Co-Lead alongside Wang.
- Previous role: Github CEO
- He co-founded Ximian (app that supported Linux), which was later acquired by Novell, and then co-founded Xamarin (a framework that allows developers to create cross-platform mobile apps), which Microsoft acquired.
- Likely $100M in salary & equity.

DANIEL GROSS, 34



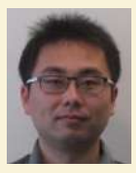
- Role at MSL: Researcher and investor.
- Previous role: CEO Safe Superintelligence
- He co-founded Cue, an AI startup that was acquired by Apple in 2013. He worked on Apple's AI search initiatives until 2017.

THE CORE TEAM

TRAPIT BANSAL, 35

- Role at MSL: Senior Researcher / AI Specialist.
- Previous role: OpenAI's technical staff.
- He has contributed to reinforcement learning in OpenAI for reasoning, which is the foundational to the development of ChatGPT's internal reasoning abilities.
- He also pioneered AI models' logical step-by-step problem-solving abilities. He is also co-creator of '01' model.
- Has BSc degree from IIT-Kanpur.
- To likely paid be paid: $100 million/year.

SHUCHAO BI, 36



- Role at MSL: Senior Multimodal AI Researcher.
- Previous role: Open AI researcher.
- He is the co-creator of voice mode for GPT-4o and YouTube Shorts. These are key advancements in conversational AI.
- To likely paid be paid: $100 million/year.

HUIWEN CHANG, 34

- Role at MSL: Senior AI Researcher (vision generation).
- Previous role: OpenAI's research scientist.
- She invented MaskGIT and Muse architectures. She was a core member of the GPT-4o image generation team.
- To likely paid be paid: $50 million/year.

JI LIN

- Role at MSL: Technical Staff Member (synthetic data generation)
- Previous role: – Open AI's technical staff.
- Cocreator of GPT-4o's image generation, and previously invented MaskIT and Muse text-to-image architectures at Google Research.
- To likely be paid $20 million/year.

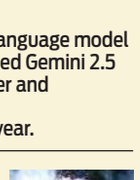
JOEL POBAR, 45

- Role at MSL: Inference Specialist
- Previous role: Anthropic's technical staff.
- Has over a decade of experience in building scalable AI models such as HHVM, Hack, and PyTorch. His work enables AI models to run efficiently at scale. He previously worked at Meta for 11 years.
- To likely be paid: $650,000/year.

JACK RAE, LATE 30S

- Role at MSL: Technical Lead in Pre training & Reasoning Models.
- Previous Role: Google DeepMind's technical lead

TIANHUI MA, 30



- Role at MSL: Senior Researcher.
- Previous role: Google DeepMind's senior software engineer and researcher.
- He did the post-training and coding for Gemini and has developed Waymo's perception systems. Waymo's perception system is a suite of technologies that allows autonomous vehicles to "see" and understand the world around them.
- To likely be paid: $10 million/year.

HONGYU REN, 30

- Role at MSL: Post-Training Lead.
- Previous role: Open AI's post-training lead.
- He has led the post-training group of GPT-4o, to increase reliability and robustness.
- His research focuses on making AI safer.
- To likely be paid: $20 million/year.

JOHAN SCHALKWYK, 50

- Role at MSL: Voice Lead.
- Previous Role: Google's Speech area tech lead.
- Background: As a Google Fellow, he has led the Maya team and is an early contributor to Google's Sesame project.
- Maya is an AI assistant using the Gemini API to combine multimodal conversational AI, computer vision, and audio processing seamlessly.
- To likely be paid: $10 million/year.

PEI SUN

- Role at MSL: Senior Researcher.
- Previous role: Google DeepMind's senior software engineer and researcher.
- He did the post-training and coding for Gemini and has developed Waymo's perception systems. Waymo's perception system is a suite of technologies that allows autonomous vehicles to "see" and understand the world around them.
- To likely be paid: $10 million/year.

JIAHUAI YU, 24

- Role at MSL: Senior Researcher.
- Previous role: Open AI's research lead.
- He has led the Perception Team at OpenAI and also co-led the Multimodal tean at Gemini.
- His research enabled AI to generate information from texts and images.
- To likely be paid: $10 million/year.

SHENGJIA ZHAO, 30

- Role at MSL: Senior Researcher.
- Previous Role: Open AI's researcher.
- Co-creator of ChatGPT, GPT-4 all mini models and is a lead researcher of data synthesis and AI safety.
- To likely be paid: $10 million.

OpenAI shuts down for a week

OpenAI shut down for a week in the beginning of July, citing employee burnout after relentless 80-hour weeks. But the timing raises questions, as Meta offers massive bonuses and snaps up OpenAI talent for MSL. While framed as a wellness break, many see it as a defensive tactic to dodge Zuck's poaching attempts.

RESEARCH: SAARIYAH IRAM

PHOTO: PTI

Diksha moves up three spots in Irish Open

KILDARE, 6 JULY

Diksha Dagar closed her third round with a birdie to gain three places to move to Tied 53rd at the 2025 KPMG Women's Irish Open on the Ladies European Tour. Diksha with cards of 75-73-73 is 2-over. She moved three places up from her previous T-56th when she cut the line. Diksha, 10th on the LET Order of Merit, had a bogey on the second and then had a run of 11 pars before she got her first birdies on the Par-3 14th, but again dropped a shot on the 16th. She closed with a birdie to walk off with a smile. English amateur Lottie Woad continued her excellent form, firing a bogey-free 67 (-6) to hold a seven-shot lead heading into the final day.—*PTI*

Harvinder's twin gold leads India to second finish

BEIJING, 6 JULY

World number 1 and reigning Paralympics champion Harvinder Singh bagged two gold medals to complete a hat-trick of podium finishes, powering India to the second place in medal standings behind hosts China at the Beijing 2025 Asian Para Archery Championships here on Sunday. India ended the competition with a tally of three gold, three silver, and three bronze medals. China topped the standings with 10 gold, 4 silver, and three bronze. Singh, who shot a personal best and set a new competition record of 663 points to top the recurve men's qualifying round, first won gold in the recurve open mixed team event alongside Bhawna.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@CPJ MENA

Kidambi Srikanth loses in Canada Open semifinal

DUBAI, 6 JULY

India's Kidambi Srikanth lost to Japan's Kenta Nishimoto 21-19, 14-21, 18-21 in the semifinal of the Canada Open Super 300 badminton tournament in Calgary on Saturday. Srikanth had made a strong start to the contest, winning the first game 21-19, but his Japanese opponent fought back hard in the next two to win the game, which lasted one hour and 18 minutes. In the decider, the scores were levelled 18-18 when Nishimoto pounced on a weak return and then Srikanth sprayed wide twice to hand over the match to the Japanese.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

I got a lot of inspiration from Gill: Suryavanshi

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

Teenage sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi said he was inspired to watch Shubman Gill carrying on nonchalantly after making a hundred and wants to emulate the Indian Test skipper in future matches. Suryavanshi made a sparkling 143 off just 78 balls to become the fastest and youngest batter to make a hundred in Youth ODIs during India U-19's fourth match against England on Saturday at Worcester. "I got a lot of inspiration from him (Gill) because I saw the game. After making 100 and 200, he didn't leave the game and took the team ahead," Suryavanshi said in a video posted by BCCI on its 'X' account.—*PTI*

Gill leads by example as India register historic win

Shubman Gill is a carbon copy of Kohli: Jonathan Trott

BIRMINGHAM, 6 JULY

Indian players are celebrating a historic Win at Edgbaston PHOTO: PTI

India outplayed England by 336 runs in the second Test at Edgbaston, Birmingham on Sunday to level the five-match series 1-1.

With the win, the Shubman Gill-led side scripted history as it turned out to be India's first-ever Test win at the venue.

India previously played 8 matches in Birmingham and lost 7 of them, while drawing one. They have finally broken a 58-year jinx of not winning a match there.

It was a batting paradise on offer where Gill scored an aggregate 430 with knocks of 269 in the first innings and 161 in the second.

Gill is a carbon copy of Kohli: Jonathan Trott

Former England batter Jonathan Trott feels privileged to have watched current India captain Shubman Gill's double hundred and the second innings century in the Edgbaston Test, which had shades of another genius, Virat Kohli.

Gill scored 269 and 161 in both Indian innings and now has the second-highest individual aggregate of runs in a single Test (430) behind former England skipper Graham Gooch."Today, he showed how complete a batter he is.

It reminded me of the previous Indian number four — almost a carbon copy of that genius. I don't think he could've dreamed of a better start to his first two Tests on this tour. Sure, he'd have liked to win at Headingley, but now he's hopefully set up a fantastic victory here tomorrow," Trott told JioHotstar."I honestly feel privileged to be here and witness that innings.

I can't recall him giving the English bowlers even a single chance. The way he shifted gears hitting sixes at will without slogging, just pure cricket shots, was something special."Trott currently coaches Afghanistan and guided the team to the T20 World Cup semi-final in 2024.

Brief Scores.

India 587 & 427/6 declared in 83 overs (Shubman Gill 161, Ravindra Jadeja 69 not out, Josh Tongue 2/93. England 407 and 271 in 68.1 overs (Jamie Smith 88, Brydon Carse 38, Akash Deep 6/99). —*PTI*

WORLD BOXING CUP

Two-time youth world champion Sakshi bagged India's first gold medal at the second World Boxing Cup PHOTO: PTI

Sakshi bags India's first gold medal

ASTANA, 6 JULY

Two-time youth world champion Sakshi bagged India's first gold medal at the second World Boxing Cup with a dominant performance in the women's 54kg final here on Sunday.

The 24-year-old was at her attacking best as she registered a unanimous verdict win against the USA's Joseline Perez.

The Indian contingent has had a fruitful outing at the World Boxing Cup here and is assured of a total of 11 medals.

India had bagged six medals in the first leg in Brazil, including a gold and a silver.

There were four Indian boxers in action in the first session, and it was Sakshi who managed to stand atop the podium with a stellar display that combined speed and combination punches.

Earlier, Meenakshi pushed hard for victory against local favorite Nazym Kyzaibay in the 48kg final but ended on the wrong side of a 3-2 verdict.

Jugnoo (men's 85kg) and Pooja Rani (women's 80kg) will also return home with silver medals after losing their respective finals.

Jugnoo went down 0-5 against Bekzad Nurdauletov of Kazakhstan while Pooja too lost by an identical margin to Australia's Eseta Flint.

Four more Indians will be vying for gold medals in the evening session, with Brazil leg gold medallist Hitesh Gulia (men's 70kg) leading the charge along with Abhinash Jamwal (men's 65kg), Jasmine (women's 57kg,) and Nupur (women's 85+ kg). —*PTI*

Members of the Indian women's cricket team with the High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom Vikram Doraiswami during a group photo, at India House, in London PHOTO: PTI

Indian women's cricket team warmly welcomed

LONDON, 6 JULY

The Indian women's cricket team, which is in England for the T20I and ODI series, received a rousing welcome at a community gathering at the India House here.

The Indian team and the support staff, led by head coach Amol Muzumdar, gathered on the grounds of the High Commission of India on Saturday evening.

Indian High Commissioner to the UK Vikram Doraiswami welcomed the "genuine heroes" who inspire Indians around the world with their performance and also their passion and commitment to cricket.

"What they have done is to revolutionise sport and to revolutionise the idea of participation in everything in India," said Doraiswami.

"Today, there is nothing that young Indian women feel they cannot do because of you and an earlier generation of cricket players... You have magic with you and you share it with us everywhere you play on the field, for which we are very, very grateful," he said while addressing the squad.

"When you look at our cricket team, our hockey team, or any of our sports teams, these represent India at its best. —*PTI*

CARLSEN STORMS INTO LEAD, GUKESH SUFFERS LOSS

CROATIA, 6 JULY

GM Magnus Carlsen started day four of the 2025 SuperUnited Croatia Rapid & Blitz trailing World Champion Gukesh Dommaraju by four points but ended the day two points ahead after scoring 7.5/9 while Gukesh crashed to 1.5/9. GM Jan-Krzysztof Duda is second, 1.5 points behind Carlsen, while GM Wesley So had the second-best day of blitz, scoring 6.5/9 and narrowly missing a win over the leader.

"It's been a good day, and of course, the score, especially relative to others, is not something I could have dreamed of," said Carlsen, after once again demonstrating his formidable blitz skills. It wasn't quite the 9/9 we'd seen on the first day of the blitz in Zagreb in 2023.

Carlsen confessed his score was perhaps slightly more than his play had deserved, and said he'd been struggling in the opening draw against GM Anish Giri and then for most of the second-round game against GM Alireza Firouzja. —*PTI*

WIMBLEDON 2025

Taylor Fritz advances to QFs after Jordan Thompson retires

LONDON, 6 JULY

Taylor Fritz advanced to the Wimbledon quarter-finals for the third time on Sunday when Australian Jordan Thompson was forced to retire due to injury.

The fifth-seeded American led Tompson 6-1, 3-0 when the 31-year-old ended play on No. 1 Court.Fritz arrived in London off the back of a record fourth Eastbourne title last week and was pushed to his limits in his opening two matches at SW19.

The No. 5 player in the PIF ATP Rankings rallied from the brink to defeat Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard in five sets in the first round and then went the distance against Gabriel Diallo in round two. He downed Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in four sets in the third round.

Taylor Fritz

Kartal beaten by Anastasia as Wimbledon controversy erupts

Sonay Kartal was knocked out of Wimbledon after her Russian rival claimed the British player got special treatment when the electronic line calling failed on Centre Court. Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, 34, recovered to knock the last British female out of the singles 7-6, 6-4. But the former French Open final was furious when the technology failed at 4-4 in the tight first set when a Kartal shot appeared to go long on game point.

German umpire Nico Helwerth ordered the point to be replayed, and Pavlyuchenkova had her serve broken to allow the home player to serve for the set. —*PTI*

Sonay Kartal

Djokovic 'blessed' to record 100th Wimbledon win

Novak Djokovic became only the third player in Wimbledon history to reach 100 victories - after Martina Navratilova and Roger Federer - with his 6-3, 6-0, 6-4 win in the third round over Miomir Kecmanovic. Djokovic, who has won seven of his 24 Grand Slam titles at the All England Club, took control by winning nine consecutive games from 3-3 in the first set on Centre Court against his Serbian compatriot on Saturday, en route to his latest milestone.

NORRIS WINS BRITISH GRAND PRIX IN CAREER FIRST

PARIS, 6 JULY

Lando Norris took advantage of Oscar Piastri's penalty to win the British Grand Prix for the first time in his career.

During a wild, we,t and chaotic race at Silverstone, Piastri was dealt a 10-second sanction by the stewards after he slammed on his brakes at 130mph ahead of a safety car restart.

Max Verstappen was forced to take evasive action, with the stewards coming down hard on the Australian.

It cost Piastri the win, with Norris crossing the line 6.8 seconds clear of his championship team-mate and McLaren rival. Norris' fourth victory of the season allows him to reduce the championship deficit from 15 points to eight with his second win in as many weekends, while Nico Hulkenberg landed his first podium in Formula One after 239 starts. Lewis Hamilton had to settle for fourth.Verstappen spun from second and crossed the line in fifth following a late pass on Lance Stroll. —*PTI*

India to bid for World Athletics C'ships 2029, 2031

BENGALURU, 6 JULY

India will mount a 'strategic' bid for both the 2029 and 2031 World Athletics Championships when the process begins later this year, hoping to get the hosting right of one of the two editions of the showpiece, national federation spokesperson Adille Sumariwalla said on Sunday.

World Athletics, the sport's governing body, will announce the hosts of both the 2029 and 2031 editions in September 2026.

The deadline for the expression of interest by the member countries is 1 October 2025.

"We are going to do strategic bidding for 2029 and 2031 (Championships). Both editions will be awarded together, and whichever edition we get is fine," Sumariwalla, a vice president of the World Athletics and former president of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI), told PTI. —*PTI*

Arsenal signs Zubimendi from Real Sociedad

BENGALURU, 6 JULY

Arsenal on Sunday confirmed the signing of midfielder Martin Zubimendi from Real Sociedad.

The Premier League club will pay a total of around ₹65million (£55m, $76.5m) for the Spanish midfielder, more than his release clause which was in the region of ₹60m (£51m) after agreeing with Real Sociedad to pay for his transfer in instalments rather than in one lump sum.

Advertisement

The 26-year-old, who rejected an approach from Liverpool last summer, came through the ranks at Sociedad before becoming a regular in its first team. The deep-lying midfielder, who played 236 times for the Spanish club, scoring 10 goals, has signed a five-year deal.

Zubimendi helped his country win Euro 2024, coming on for Manchester City's Rodri at half-time in the final against England as Mikel Oyarzabal's goal claimed the trophy for Spain. —*PTI*

DEEPIKA'S GOAL NOMINATED FOR MAGIC SKILL AWARD

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

Indian women's hockey team forward Deepika has been nominated for the Poligras Magic Skill Award for her incredible solo field goal against world No. 1, the Netherlands, during the 2024-25 FIH Hockey Pro League season. The nominations for the Poligras Magic Skill Award for the 2024-25 FIH Hockey Pro League season were released on Friday, and the deadline to vote is 14 July at 3:29 am IST.

The winner is decided by hockey fans across the world based on who they think had the best moment and the goal during the season. Deepika's iconic moment took place in February 2025 during the Bhubaneswar leg of the Pro League when India defeated the Netherlands in a shootout after a 2-2 draw at the Kalinga Stadium.

In the 35th minute, Deepika scored an amazing field goal as India were trailing by two goals. Deepika dribbled down the left flank brilliantly as she went around the Netherlands' defense, kissed the baseline, dinked the ball over a defender's stick, and finished the move with a wonderful strike past the keeper into the net. —*PTI*

CLUB WORLD CUP

Messi scores twice as Miami defeats Montreal

MONTREAL, 6 JULY

Lionel Messi scored a pair of spectacular goals, including the tie-breaker late in the first half, as Inter Miami defeated CF Montreal 4-1.

Luis Suárez directed a long ball from Tomás Avilés to Messi with a header, who had time to gather the ball, dribble into the box, and finish with his left foot to the far post to make it 2-1 in the 40th minute on Saturday.

It was the first M S game in over a month for Miami while competing in the Club World Cup. PSG eliminated Miami 4-0 last week.

Prince Owusu gave Montreal (3-13-5) a quick lead two minutes into the game.

Tadeo Allende, assisted by Messi, scored in the 33rd minute to tie the game for Miami (9-3-5), which has won three straight, including a 3-2 win over Montreal at home on 28 May.

Telasco Segovia scored in the 60th minute, and Messi connected again two minutes later, again weaving through a pack of Montreal defenders. Messi has 12 goals in 14 MSL games this season.

Óscar Ustari made seven saves for Miami after a Messi giveaway gave Owusu an easy goal.

When the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner took a corner kick early on, spectators left their seats and piled into the lower parts of the stands to get a closer look.

And the "Messi! Messi! Messi!" chants were constant, whether Miami trailed or led by three goals, upsetting some Montreal players. "I still enjoy to watch him play," said Miami coach Javier Mascherano, a former Messi teammate with Argentina and Barcelona. "As a coach, for me it's a privilege to coach him. And when I say coaching him, it's a way to say that I am the coach, because no one can coach Messi." —*PTI*